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ABSTRACT

This document consists of six issues of a newsletter subtitled "Dedicated to Helping Gifted Children Reach their Full Potential." These issues focus on personality types, program administration, creativity, counseling, the arts, and cultural diversity. Feature articles have the following titles and authors: "A World of Difference: Children and Psychological Type" (Diane Farris); "Personality Patterns of the Gifted" (Shelagh A. Gallagher); "The Principal's Role in Gifted Education" (Holly M. Hultgren); "The Pullout: Still a Useful Program Model?" (Suzanne H. McDaniel); "The Divergently Thinking Child" (Deirdre V. Lovecky); "Creativity in Gifted Education: Encouraging Innovation" (Jerry D. Flack); "Wearing Their Shoes: Role Playing to Reverse Underachievement" (F. Richard Olenchak); "Preventive Counseling for the Gifted" (Linda Silverman); "Arts, Talents and Gifts" (Kenneth R. Seeley); "Drawing: A Visual Approach to Learning" (Jeanie Goertz); "Giftedness, Cultural Diversity, and the Old Melting Pot" (Carole Ruth Harris); and "Cultural Diversity in Gifted Education" (Joyce VanTassel-Baska). The issues also contain regular columns such as "Kaleidoscope," "Instructional Strategies," "Parenting the Gifted," "The Reading Room," "The Highly Gifted," "Bright Beginnings," "Personality Plus," "Creative Ventures and Encounters," "Hidden Gifted Learner," "Current Developments in Gifted Education," and "From Parent to Parent." (JDD)

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UNDERSTANDING OUR GIFTED®

Dedicated to helping gifted children reach their full potential

September – October, 1990

Volume 3, Issue 1

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A World of Difference *Children and Psychological Type*

Diane Farris, Ph.D.

Introduction
Near a Cave of Possibility

Two people stood before a cave. Massive boulders had covered the entrance in such an intricate way that it had taken great effort to get so close. Only a few stones remained, and then the entrance would be clear. The two archeologists stood at the entrance with equal anticipation, but surprisingly different thoughts. Dr. Henson, lightly running her fingers over an ancient petroglyph of a figure with large hands, said, "This is a rare and mysterious moment. Anything could be in there. We will be in the presence of ancient beings and the objects that held meaning for them. There could be smooth, cool stones, vessels that contained nurturance, drawings made by human hands and hearts. This is what I love about our work, the numinous mystery."

The other archeologist, Dr. Rose, gave Henson a wry smile, "We have had this conversation in so many guises. The only mystery to me is, How can two professionals who respect each others' work and share a friendship disagree so profoundly? The excitement of our work is not *(Continued on page 7)*

EC 301286

Personality Patterns of the Gifted

Shelagh A. Gallagher, Ph.D.

Parents and teachers of talented students often despair of their charges – their behavior seems so inconsistent!! Why, ponders a teacher, are students who are so careful about organizing their ideas so sloppy in presenting them on paper? What, sighs the librarian, can I do to get students who are so eager to receive books equally eager to return them on time? How, mutters the angry parent, could a kid so smart **forget to put gas in the car**???

These frustrations are, in part, a result of the narrow perspective many parents and teachers use about giftedness. This narrow focus, in turn, is due to the way in which giftedness is generally identified and described: "giftedness" is what students do in the classroom. Gifted kids are the ones who score higher on tests, get more answers right (and faster), win more awards, and acquire more skills. This surface, skill-oriented approach to talent is prevalent in our schools: students are identified primarily on the basis of test scores, and programing is often based on those score alone. Although almost everyone *(Continued on page 11)*

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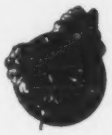

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome back! As we begin a new school year, we also begin our **third year** of *Understanding Our Gifted*. Thank you to all of you who have made this possible. Please continue to help us grow by sharing our newsletter with others.

This issue is on Personality Types, and features several articles on Jung's typology as measured by the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. Even as the reality of giftedness itself is questioned, Jung's typology has its detractors. But those who have worked closely with gifted children and their families find the typology useful in explaining differences in style, and helping people to understand one another.

The book, *Please Understand Me* (Keirsey & Bates, 1978), begins:

> *I may be your spouse, your parent, your offspring, your friend, or your colleague. If you will allow me any of my own wants, or emotions, or beliefs, or actions, then you open yourself, so that some day these ways of mine might not seem so wrong, and might finally appear to you as right – for me. To put up with me is the first step to understanding me. Not that you embrace my ways as right for you, but that you are no longer irritated or disappointed with me for my seeming waywardness. And in understanding me you might come to prize my differences from you and, far from seeking to change me, preserve and even nurture those differences. (p. 1)*

Differences are to be applauded, not stifled. And Jung's typology enables people to accept themselves and others, rather than trying to make others into carbon copies of themselves. This is important in teaching, and even more important in parenting. **All** of the types are valuable.

> *The clearest vision of the future comes only from an intuitive,*
> *The most practical realism only from a Sensing type,*
> *The most incisive analysis only from a Thinker,*
> *And the most skillful handling of people only from a Feeling type.*
> *Success for any enterprise demands a variety of types,*
> *each in the right place.*
>
> – Isabel Briggs Myers –

We invite you to sit back, relax and join us on this journey into type, and see where you fit in the scheme of things.

Linda Silverman

Understanding Our Gifted

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James R.Delisle

ALEIDOSCOPE

Empowerment: *More Than Just A Buzzword*

When it comes to inventing jargon, educators have few equals. Often, the terms they devise sound more complex than they actually are. For example, "whole language" is little more than using literature and a child's experiences to teach reading and writing. And "differentiated curriculum" merely provides students with school experiences that match their talents and interests.

Another such term is "empowerment," a trendy buzzword that has become popular now that the "Me Generation" is growing up and looking outward. In town after town, classroom after classroom, people are reaching out to others whose lives are filled more with despair than with hope. This focus away from self and toward others has caused many in their 30-somethings to recall their 1960s roots, and the social movements that were spawned then.

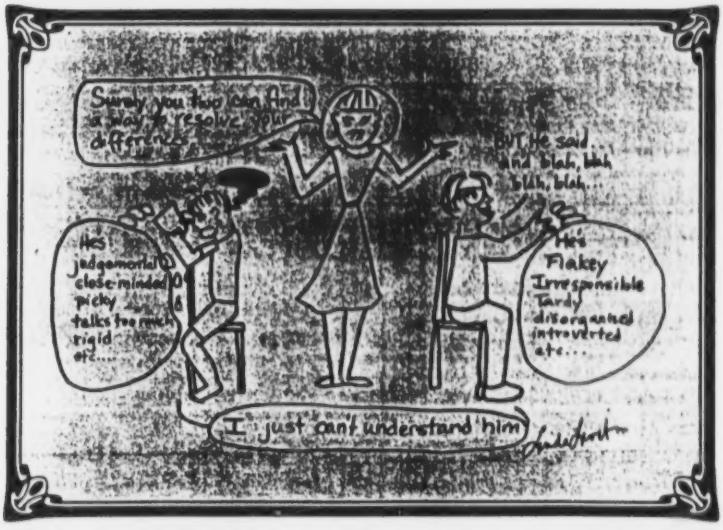
Is it "*deja vu* all over again"? Perhaps, but this time, today, a generation after Woodstock, a new and valuable twist has been added: *this* time, school children are being brought along as participants, not just spectators. For example:

- In Middlebourne, West Virginia, middle school students "adopted" a hospital in Latin America, raising money to send both Christmas toys and medical supplies to children in need of both.
- In Walnut Hills, California, a high school social studies class rewrote voting instructions to make them more understandable for citizens with limited English proficiency (the State of California adopted these instructions for all election ballots).
- In Northampton, Massachusetts, a group of young children protested their city's plan to convert a park into a parking lot. Today, the swings and slides are still standing.

On and on the stories go. A Children's Crusade, of sorts, spawned by the immediacy of our communication links with the entire planet. An oil spill in Texas? We see live coverage on CNN... An earthquake in Iran? Satellites beam back immediately the desperate plight of our global neighbors. Adults see the pain; so do the children. Adults want to help; kids do, too. So they do, in ways both large and small, the children become empowered to make their world a better, safer, greener place.

There is danger in empowerment, but only if it is misguided or purposeless. No one person will solve all the world's woes – not even the most highly gifted child – nor should he or she feel obligated to do so. And to empower children may cause them to question the "balance of power" in their *own* schools and homes ("Isn't it unfair that *I* have to make my bed every day when you and Dad don't always make yours?") But still, no monsters need be created by showing our children the positive impacts they can have on their neighborhood and their world. And besides, consider the alternative: if we refuse our children any attempts to improve our world "until they're old enough" they may grow up in fear, or feeling powerless, or (most insidious of all) apathetic.

Trends come and go. Buzzwords change to accommodate our present concerns. But world health, global awareness and neighbor helping neighbor are time-worn constants that never go out of style... Share this reality with your children and watch their minds and hearts grow.


Surely you two can find a way to resolve your differences
He's judgemental close-minded picky talks too much rigid etc....
But he said... and blah, blah blah, blah...
He's Flakey Irresponsible Tardy disorganized introverted etc....
I just can't understand him

James Delisle, Ph.D. is Coordinator of Gifted Education, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio and author of *Gifted Children Speak Out.*

Elizabeth Meckstroth

PARENTING

Just As An Acorn Strives To Be An Oak Tree...

Our personalities propel our growth. The thread of psychological types has been woven through these Parenting columns. In working with families, routinely, I ask each person in the family to complete the *Myers-Briggs* or *Murphy-Meisgeier Type Indicator*. Interpreting "type" provides operational terms to understand and appreciate our selves, our children and our relationships. It is a window out of our own insular, self-defending view to a broader perspective of possibilities for developing ourselves and for coping with differences more constructively.

One mother of a 13 year old wrote: *"Thank you for the Myers-Briggs results. Josh's reactions are interesting. He is very impressed with the small percentage [1%] of people with the INFP type. Previously, he seemed to feel some pain about not having the friendships his peers experience and he would question why he does not fit in with his peers. Now he seems happier, more confident, and he no longer questions his relationships with peers. ... I really appreciate the positive nature of the personality description. At times, I have worried about Josh's sensitive nature, but now it is much easier for me to view it as part of his personality. And I think as my husband and I help Josh deal with the friendship issues and his often hurt feelings, we will be able to rely on this information to enhance communication and to acknowledge his feelings. ..."*

Most responses to learning about personality type usually sound like, "Thank you for giving me permission to be who I am."

Another side of understanding personality preferences is to help us recognize how we're missing out in life! What possibilities do we overlook? When do we assume we're not OK? What ideas and feelings might we ignore?

The majority of highly intelligent people are inherently intuitive. They are the tangential thinkers; they love to pursue possibilities and live in a world of metaphors, meanings and relationships. For example 93% of Rhodes Scholars and 82% of National Merit Finalists were found to be intuitive, compared with about 14% of non-college-prep high school students (Myers, 1980). In our country, intuitive people are a minority – about 1 out of 3 or 4 people tend to relate to their world intuitively.

There appears to be a predominance of introverts among gifted people. Again, these are only about a 25-35% minority in our society. Our introverts crave alone time and have an intense need for privacy. They live mainly in the inner world of concepts and ideas. They like to understand the world before experiencing it. Our mainstream culture tends to regard introversion as a sort of pathology, needing to be "fixed"!

When we relate intelligence to a structure of 16 personality types, the 4 types most correlated with high intelligence (INFP, INFJ, INTP, INTJ) make up only 8% of the population (Keirsey & Bates, 1978; Myers & McCaulley, 1985). It is both comforting and discouraging for our gifted children to accept that being highly intelligent also probably means being a rare personality type.

How we make ourselves angry by imposing our views and styles on other people and seethe when they do not see things our way! For example, our "feeling" people who are sensitive and empathic may be acutely wounded by other people's seeming cold, crude attitude. The more "thinking types" can absolutely reject "feeling" people as "direly irrational."

Get a type topic book; take the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* and find someone trained in interpreting type. Then you will have a bridge to understanding and developing yourself and those closest to you.

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Elizabeth Meckstroth is a therapist and consultant in Evanston, Illinois and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child*.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Joyce VanTassel-Baska

In my last column, I suggested that secondary students compare two short stories on several elements. Six possible instructional strategies for the activity were presented: oral discussion, in-class writing, lecture, panel discussion, development of a product, and essay assigned for homework.

How does one make the choice among even this admittedly limited list of options? I would submit that the selection of the instructional process for this activity depends on several factors:

Instructional time. Given the relative importance of a given activity, decisions about instructional process need to consider real time constraints. Some options are more time-consuming than others. If time is limited, it would be wise to select a strategy that will fit in the allotted time.

Mixing of instructional processes. Choice of a process to accompany any activity is somewhat dependent on what processes have preceded this one and what will follow it as well. Variety of approaches works well with gifted learners.

Student need for a particular approach. The needs of gifted learners themselves sometimes affect a choice of instructional process. Perhaps there is a need for more cooperative learning at a given point in time or a need for enhancing expository writing skills or being able to articulate a perspective orally. Such needs may then become the criteria for choosing one's approach.

Effectiveness of a given approach with gifted learners. A meta-analysis of research on gifted learners has demonstrated a high effect size (.83) for increased homework, a moderate effect size (.56) for active questioning and discussion and a moderate effect size (.41) for inquiry-discovery teaching (Walberg, 1990). If we wish to make intelligent choices of strategies, then examining what we know about what works would seem to be prudent. While all of the options would appear viable with the gifted, some would be rated higher based on studies that have been done.

The nature of the activity itself. The choice of a particular activity may make the choice of instructional process easier. For example, in our critical analysis activity, we might discern that it is basically a reflective activity, one in which gifted learners need considerable time "to think about" the two stories in depth. Thus, an instructional process that honors thinking time may be a better choice than one that emphasizes quick response or group interaction skills.

These criteria then become critical in making decisions about what instructional process would be most appropriate. What would my choice of instructional process be, based on a careful weighing of these factors? My ratings on a 1-10 scale (10 being high and 1 being low) appear below for each approach.

Rating	
5	1) Oral discussion
7	2) In-class writing
3	3) Lecture and seatwork
6	4) Panel discussion
5	5) Product development
9	6) Homework essay

My professional choice would be to have students do the activity at home in essay form. This choice rates very high on effectiveness factors, instructional time factors, and "match to activity" considerations. It is quite high also with respect to student need. One of the best documented weaknesses of gifted learners coming out of secondary schools is their lack of writing skills in the expository form required by colleges (Applebee, et al., 1990). The issue of mixing strategies could be satisfied by a follow-up discussion of 20-30 minutes that allows students reflective inquiry, conducted in oral form.

While the ultimate choice of a homework essay may appear unexciting, as one can see, it is one of the best instructional tools we could consider given all salient factors. The moral of this exercise, then, is that instructional process decisions should be made thoughtfully and carefully, mindful of all the variables that may impact on the decision. Blind allegiance to one or two "fun" strategies is insufficient to prepare gifted learners for the vast world of knowledge.

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Stephanie S. Tolan

HE READING ROOM

This issue we'll be focusing our attention on books for the very young in which the central issue is individuality. The first, *The Bat-Poet*, is by the poet Randall Jarrell, with pictures by Maurice Sendak. The central character is a "little light brown bat, the color of coffee with cream in it." At first, like the other bats, he hangs upside down from the porch roof during the summer days, snuggled against the warm, furry bodies of the other bats, waking at night to fly and catch insects.

In this way, he is an ordinary bat. But when summer ends and the other bats move to the shelter of the barn for the daylight sleeps, this bat doesn't go with them. Sleeping alone, he begins to waken during the day and notice new sights and sounds. One of these is the song of the mockingbird. Soon the bat is trying to sing like the mockingbird. Having no vocal range, he gives up on music and contents himself with lyrics. A poet has been born.

Now he must find two things – ideas for his poems and an audience who will listen. Little by little he discovers the possibilities and also the limits of his new passion. The other bats do not understand, but he keeps trying to share with them. For sharing is an essential part of poetry. This story offers children the richness of Jarrell's poetry as well as the joys and perils of the bat-poet, the artist in society.

The second book is *The Lemming Condition*, by the actor Alan Arkin. Bubber, a young lemming, is restless. It is the day that has lived in lemming myth, the day of the great march to the west. Like all the other lemmings, like his parents and his sister, he is impelled by instinct to agitated activity on this important day.

But Bubber is no ordinary lemming. Bubber thinks. He considers. Gathering clover on the cliff above the lemming colony, he meets his friend Crow, to whom he explains the great migration to the west. Crow listens doubtfully. He points out that to the west are the cliffs, and beyond that the sea. Bubber explains that they will pass the cliffs. "Just keep going west into the ocean," Crow says. Bubber agrees. "Can you swim?" Crow asks.

Bubber, never having seen water, much less been in it, admits that he doesn't know. He begins to think. He begins to consider. Agreeing to let Crow fly him to a pond where he can test his feelings about water, he steps gingerly in. And realizes that whether other lemmings do or not, he does *not* swim. He does not!

On the way home from the pond Bubber meets a strange solitary lemming who assures him that "The Great Leap" is a myth. Since no two lemmings can ever agree on anything, they couldn't possibly all do anything together. Bubber is not convinced.

He heads home, across a plain that is weirdly empty, poised for something unstoppable. As he arrives at his burrow, it begins. Nearly run over by his own family, Bubber soon finds himself in a mass of lemmings surging west. Is he a thinking individual or is he a lemming? Will he or won't he be part of The Great Leap? The story is part allegory, part suspense tale. Funny, scary and profound, it has many levels for thought and discussion.

Both of these books can lead to valuable discussions about how gifted children can belong to the group yet retain their differences.

Stephanie Tolan, from Waterford, New York, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child.*

the unknown beyond those stones, but that we can predict almost exactly what will be there. We know the period, we have others' research notes, we have seen similar sites... We have amassed a large data base that allows us to know what we will find. And this particular excavation has been running like a top, right on schedule." He tapped his notebook with the calendar he had enjoyed creating and following. And so they stood, colleagues and friends, Henson touching a drawing made centuries before by an unknown hand and Rose tapping a notebook, both eagerly anticipating the next moments, both unsettled by the other's comments.

If you enjoy metaphor, you may be thinking about the implications of this scene, these individuals. If you don't, you may well be wondering when will this article get to its point? One way of looking at these two kinds of responses, as well as the scene at the cave, is from the perspective of Psychological Type. If you enjoy walking in a forest of metaphor, you may well prefer using your **iNtuition**. If you prefer to get on with things in a more concrete manner, then you may prefer **Sensing**. If you have not already ascertained your type, please review the table at the end of the article *(on page 10)*, as it will help you make sense of what follows. It may also give you an opportunity to reflect on the possible types of your family members.

AN OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TYPES

For me, type is one way of approaching the mysteries in the cave of human meanings. It is a flexible approach, the goal of which is appreciating and celebrating our similarities and differences. If Drs. Henson and Rose above knew about type, they would be more comfortable with their differing approaches, more able to celebrate their differences. As it is, they probably do, indeed, rely more than they know on their complementary gifts: Henson's imaginative and feeling connection to people, her spontaneous openness to new experience, and Rose's imaginative theory and his careful attention to logic and planning.

...type is one way of approaching the mysteries in the cave of human meanings. It is a flexible approach, the goal of which is appreciating and celebrating our similarities and differences.

My experience has been that while all children enjoy working with type, gifted children have a special feel for it. They are often facile with theory and have a need to understand their own dynamics in groups, be they family, peer or society. When I work with children and psychological type, I call it the **"Theory of Good Differences,"** a phase borrowed from a pioneer in this field, Dr. Elizabeth Murphy (who, with Charles Meisgeir, wrote the children's type indicator, the MMTIC, in 1987).

Psychological type theory, as we are discussing it in this article, is based in the work of Carl Jung (1938) and developed in the work of Isabel Briggs-Myers (1980) and others. There are four dimensions. On each dimension, an individual will prefer one mode and that preference is part of his or her "type." While one may feel comfortable with both choices, and no doubt uses both gifts, there will probably be one which is experienced as a kind of "home base."

THE DIMENSIONS

The first dimension has to do with how one is energized, through Extraversion (the outer world of people, interaction, discussion) or Introversion (the inner world of reflection, shared perhaps with a few close friends). The second dimension has to do with the information one attends to: if the function of Sensing is preferred, then detail and factual information are foreground, while if the preference is for iNtuition, then ideas, possibilities and more global vision are foreground. The third dimension has to do with how one uses what has been taken in or perceived to make decisions. The functions in this dimension are Thinking and Feeling. While we all think and feel, the person with a Thinking preference makes decisions based on logic, reason and fairness while the individual with a Feeling preference makes decisions based on caring, empathy, and kindness. This is the dimepsion where we see how the individual values. The fourth dimension has to do with life style: the person with a preference for Judging tends to enjoy organization, planning, and predictability, while the person with a preference for Perceiving tends to enjoy spontaneity, "going with the flow," seeing what will happen. Hopefully, these preferences will be clarified in the examples below.

A CLOSER LOOK AT DIMENSIONS OF TYPE

Introversion and Extraversion

In an earlier article (Alvino, et.al, 1989), I presented an example of Extraversion and Introversion in a family situation. Jung (1938) considered this dimension most important since the inner or outer orientation colors every aspect of one's world. Silverman (1989) noted that introversion appears often in the highly gifted while it is relatively rare in the general population in this country. I have observed that extraverted gifted children who are achieving in school often cast themselves against type in choosing to work alone on projects. The self-awareness of the gifted child sometimes allows him or her to move beyond preference. With type language, this desirable ability is greatly facilitated. *(Continued on page 8)*

Most children act from their preferences. The following scene is a family trip with two bright children: one is reading a book of amazing facts. The parents urge her to look at the scenery and use this time to talk together. The other child is also reading, reciting out loud the quickly passing signs and commenting upon them while changing stations on the car radio. Our introvert in this scene is trying to use the down time in the car to recharge her energy, by reading, dreaming, being quiet. It is important that people she loves are very near, even while their chatter may seem loud and intrusive. From their point of view, they are also using the down time to recharge their energies, but for extraverts this happens through thinking out loud, being with others in an active way, gaining stimulation from the environment, the radio and conversation. It may be difficult for the family to understand their introvert. And it may be difficult for her to understand and accept herself; she may pick up the message that there is something wrong with her preference, something strange or antisocial. Internalized, this can affect her self-esteem. Transformed into attempting to change any of the dimensions, this becomes "falsification of type," something many of us have done to fit an important context, like family.

If the family in the car understands type, they can begin to negotiate without accusations or misunderstandings. Simply acknowledging one another's preferences creates a new space and sense of acceptance. "I know you love to read the signs, but I really need some quiet time" is a statement of fact and acceptance, not hurtful judging. From there, plans can be made from which everyone can benefit: "Why don't we all play a sign game for 15 minutes, then have a quiet time when people can read, listen to a personal tape recorder, enjoy the scenery...." You see the possibilities.

Sensing and iNtuition, Thinking and Feeling: Some Portraits

I'd like to move to the central four functions: Sensing and iNtuition, Thinking and Feeling. Sensing and iNtuition guide the kind of information we attend and give meaning to. Thinking and Feeling indicate the way we prefer to make decisions. Please keep in mind that we all use all the functions, but that we have a natural preference on each dimension, preferences of varying strength. To clarify the functions, imagine another situation, the job chart on the refrigerator, an organizational effort that has been attempted in many homes. Imagine that such a chart has gone up. Here are four reactions from children with four different pairs of functions. (You may also get some insights into the parents from the children's comments.)

Twyla, the Sensing/Thinking child, is delighted to see the chart. *"I'm relieved they finally got a chart up. They are never really clear enough about exactly what my jobs are and when I am supposed to do them. This way, I can plan and then check them off and count the checks at the end of the week. I wonder if we are supposed to make the checks with a pen or a pencil. Where is the pen or the pencil? This chart could still use a lot more detail about the jobs, such as specifically in what order do I do the jobs. Also, I would like to know exactly what the rewards are and when we'll get them. For that matter, I'd like to know what the consequences are for not doing jobs, although that won't be a problem for me."*

Will, the iNtuitive/Thinking child, is pleased if dubious about the chart. *"It's a step in the right direction. You know what's expected and that there are consequences if you don't do it. I could have made a lot more interesting and logical chart than this. I think I will, but on the computer. The thing is, charts are supposed to make things fair, which is very important. I don't think my parents, at least my mom, can keep this up, and I'm worried that they might postpone the rewards or let the consequences slide by. If Dad had made this, it might look more logical. At least they are using checks instead of silly stickers. I bet that this same chart will be up in three weeks, half filled out and with the wrong dates on it.... Why should I participate?"*

Nell, the iNtuitive/Feeling child, is concerned about the chart. *"Another chart. The charts make me feel like they don't trust me, but I know they do. This one is a little different from the old one, and that's good. At least they could have put my new name on it – they said they would call me my new name this week. I'm worried that Mom is just doing this because she thinks she should. Maybe Dad told her to get organized again. I know she would just rather have us do our jobs out of love or maybe remind us and give us treats and hugs. That's what I really like, too. I'm also worried about the consequences for anyone who might just forget to do their jobs or mark the chart. People should have a lot of second chances. What should chances be called when you go beyond two? I'll do my best, but it won't last long anyway."*

Leo, the Sensing/Feeling child, is worried about the chart. *"I hope I can do this chart the way they want me to. I need to know exactly what they expect. Why can't they just sit down and explain exactly what they want me to do, and tell me the fun things we'll do together when the chores are done? This chart even looks confusing. It will be fun to keep track of the week and count up my checks and get a reward. What is the reward, anyway? I wish they had those colored stickers to put on instead of check marks. I would feel more like they cared about me with the stickers, and that's important."*

First, a word about the parents. The children know that this making and maintaining of charts is not Mom's strength. There is an indication that Dad values a certain kind of organization and Mom is trying to measure up to his standard. The children are aware that Mom sometimes doesn't *(Continued on page 9)*

carry through on either punishments or rewards. They also know that she loves to give approval, affection and treats. Mom is probably an intuitive who has tried a number of different approaches to the chore situation, perhaps simultaneously. She probably has a preference for feeling and finds the chart rather cold. She may be de-energized by doing something "against the grain," so doesn't attempt to make it more playful with stickers or drawings. She would rather, as her feeling child knows, have things move along in **harmony** (a key NF word) with positive feelings. Also, as an intuitive feeling person, she knows that her children have different needs and that "fairness" is as important to some as "harmony" is to others. What is happening, though, is that she is going against her own type and not really satisfying anyone, including herself. It will probably get worse as the system quickly winds down.

We all need to explore our preferences and have a comfortable way to meet the world before cultivating the opposites within ourselves.

Another possibility is that in trying to work against her own type, Mom may become inappropriately obsessive about the chart – some intuitive feeling people find they get this way when they are finally faced with highly detailed demands like tax forms. If Dad had understood type, he might have organized the chart and its deployment himself while honoring Mom's different strengths. Both parents need to take a good look at their four very different children to see how well the goals of the chart are being accomplished with each or if there might be some more appropriate motivators.

There are a number of subtle differences and similarities in the children. Wherever children share a function, for example the ST and the NT, there will be some similarities (both of the Ts here were interested in order and fairness). Where there are no shared functions (as with an NF and ST), there is a real challenge to understanding. Let's look briefly at the children and see if you find anything familiar in any of these profiles.

Twyla, the Sensing/Thinking child, feels at home with the chart. It makes so much sense to her that she doesn't anticipate that it might not work out. Working out explicitly is important to her. Flexibility is not her strength nor is imagining the styles of people of different types, like her mother. If anything, she longs for more detail than the chart provides; she is even anxious about the writing tool she will use. Working with a Twyla, we can easily address a lot of the need for detail, letting her know these are legitimate concerns. We can also try not to promise what we can't carry through on, knowing how important concrete carry-through is to her. At the same time, our gift to this child can be working to help her develop some flexibility, a glimmer that others have different concerns, and to help her get a sense of the larger context beyond the details.

Will, the iNtuitive/Thinking child, is both more flexible and more critical than Twyla, but shares her concern for fairness. Intuitive thinkers traditionally love argument for its own sake and can become overly critical of self and others. They are mystified when others are hurt by their words. Will has seen the pattern of charts in the family, and this understanding as well as inventing a better chart are more interesting than participating. Working with a Will, we can acknowledge his creativity and feel for fairness, maybe letting him develop a job system. Our gift to him might be to develop his role-taking skill, to let him know when criticism becomes hurtful and unproductive, and to help him learn ways to carry out the details of the plan and other imaginative projects he envisions.

Nell, the iNtuitive/Feeling child, experiences a lack of trust when she sees the chart, but as an intuitive feeler, she understands that her mother is trying something difficult but maybe important. She is concerned for others in the family. She'll go along with it for the sake of harmony. She, like Will, is onto the pattern and knows it won't last. She is also playing with the creation of her own perspective, such as trying out a different name this week. Working with a Nell we need to value the need for creativity, personal connection and harmony. Our gift to her might be to help this child see that not everything is to be taken personally and to focus on a level of detail in the task at hand.

Leo, the Sensing/Feeling child, is also concerned about the chart. He has little connection with it (it's neither clear or personal enough) but wants very much to please and do things right. He, too, needs the personal touch and perhaps something more immediate and fun, like the stickers, to get him interested. Working with a Sensing Feeler, we must acknowledge the comfort with the tangible and positive. Our gift to this child might be to introduce the idea of the context in which things occur, a sense of the "big picture" and its logic.

Judging and Perceiving

The last dimension in current type theory was added to Jung's original scheme by Isabel Briggs Myers (1980). It has to do with how one organizes one's world. Though this is not as core a dimension, it is easy to recognize and fun to work with in families. Those of us who live together know a lot about one another's rooms, desks, calendars and lists. The individual with a preference for Judging has a need for, and enjoyment of, planning and organization, while the Perceiving individual is more comfortable with the *(Continued on page 10)*

spontaneous and open-ended. Again, we all have elements of both. There are work situations in which everyone has to use Judging skills, but the same people might choose different skills in their weekend planning and relaxation.

The brief scenario I've chosen to illustrate this dimension has to do with a school project. The scene: it is the night before a papier mache model of Mars is due – in one family with a gifted child, Mars has been completed, embellished and ready for days. In another family with a gifted child, Mars is being hastily put together and dried in the oven to be painted at breakfast, and family conversation is heavily sprinkled with the need to plan ahead and intimations that this is the **last** of the last-minute bail-outs. The child with the last-minute Mars is a Perceiver, and, if you have one, you keep shoeboxes in the closet in case there's an eleventh hour diorama to build. You keep these materials to try to preserve your own sanity even as you try to teach some planning skills. (Type is never an excuse; the extreme perceiving individual must learn the judging skills he needs to function, though it will probably never become his preference.) The child who feels that beginning the day you get the assignment is not a moment too soon is a Judger whose skills you honor even as you try to convince her the family might not need to plan every minute of the weekend trip to enjoy it fully.

As we consider type theory and children, many interesting questions are being raised. Children are, of course, developing, and may not have a strong preference on one or more dimensions (though elementary gifted children seem to have more defined preferences than others their age.) Our gift to them can be to help them explore the options and find a "home base." **We all need to explore our preferences and have a comfortable way to meet the world before cultivating the opposites within ourselves.** Some observers see more iNtuitive children in gifted programs, but Sensing children are also represented and need a special approach.

In closing, I would like to return to the cave image. Often in parenting, we have a need to be like Dr. Rose, to schedule, predict and prescribe. This is more than understandable in the demanding world we share, calendars in hand. However, it is enriching to try the other stance, the position that others in our lives, particularly our children, are mysterious and worthy of our reverent curiosity. By giving us a non-judgmental language for dialogue, type is one helpful way to help us explore the riches of the meanings our children give to our shared world.

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What Is Your Psychological Type?

These are the dimensions of psychological type to help you type yourself. Please choose one preference on each line. These choices should become more clear as you read the two lead articles. For a complete exploration of your type, you might want to take the complete *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*.

Your ENERGIZING Attitude
(source of energy)

Extraversion Outer world of people and things	or	***Introversion*** Inner world of ideas and concepts

Your PERCEPTIVE Function
(focus of information gathered)

Sensing Facts and realities; Details and practicalities	or	***iNtuition*** Meanings and possibilities; Relationship

Your JUDGING Function
(way of making decisions)

Thinking Objective and logical; Analytical.	or	***Feeling*** Subjective and personal; Contextual.

Your ORGANIZING Attitude
(life-style)

Judging Planned and orderly; Settled and decided.	or	***Perceiving*** Flexible and spontaneous; Adaptable.

Your four choices form your type.

recognizes that gifted students also have unique non-academic characteristics in common, they are generally considered ancillary to giftedness and not an integrated part of the observed skill.

However, the "skill-oriented" perspective of giftedness is also a little short-sighted. It assumes that the mind is sectioned off into separate parts, and that each part is relatively contained and isolated. Academic talent is separate from social behavior which is separate from everyday decision-making patterns. Of course, this isn't true; the mind is infinitely complex.

That being the case, wouldn't it make more sense to think of observed academic talent as the result of an integrated system which connects cognition, personality and affect?

Could it be that the same system which drives some children to doggedly pursue astronomy also leave them with a complete lack of concern with wearing matching socks? Identifying behavior patterns in talented students which are qualitatively different from average ability students may help explain many of the differences that we see between talented and average students (and some similarities as well!).

Finding these behavior patterns was the goal of two related research projects, which focused on "personality type" as the foundation of behavior. The projects used data about talented students from three different programs serving different geographic regions of the country. In one study the personality types of talented students were compared with a group of high school students from the general population (Gallagher, Brown & Kimble, in preparation). A second study compared the personality types of a subset of talented males with high school males and with creative adult males (Gallagher, Dreyden & Kimble, in preparation). In both studies the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) was used as a measure of personality type.

THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR

The MBTI was created to identify basic behavior patterns, or "types." Four separate scales are used to describe preferences for perceiving information and making decisions about that information. In the language of the MBTI, *perceiving* is any way of becoming aware of new information from research to sensation; *judging* is any way of reaching a conclusion, including decision-making and evaluation (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). Each of the four scales describes a different aspect of the information-gathering and decision-making processes.

The first scale, *Extravert-Introvert*, describes orientations toward information. Extraverts like to look for information in the world around them and acquire mental energy by interacting with the external world. Introverts are oriented toward the inner world of ideas, getting mental energy by spending time with thoughts and concepts. Not inherently shy, Introverts enjoy solitude just as Extraverts enjoy company.

The second scale, *Sensing-Intuition*, and the third scale, Thinking-Feeling, describe mental processes. Sensing and Intuition represent alternate modes of gathering information. Sensing refers to all perception which is accessible through the senses. People who prefer Sensing like to know "what is," focusing their attention on the present moment. Good observation skills and memory for detail often accompany a Sensing preference. Intuition is associated with the perception of possibilities. Intuitive types like to think about "what could be," creating new meanings out of what already exists. They are also inclined toward theoretical or abstract thought.

While the Sensing-Intuition scale deals with perception, the *Thinking-Feeling* scale describes ways of making decisions. A Thinking preference is related to decisions made through logic and analysis. Associated characteristics include objectivity, criticality, and concern with justice and fairness. A Feeling preference refers to decision-making based on value systems. Feeling types like to create harmony among subjective values and to deal with the human element in problems.

The fourth scale, *Judging-Perceiving*, describes the attitudes and behaviors people generally show to the outside world. Judging types tend to be concerned with making decisions and like closure and organization. Perceivers are attuned to gathering information. Their outer behaviors include adaptability, spontaneity, and curiosity (Myers & McCaulley, 1985).

Although everyone uses all eight of these preferences every day, people tend to prefer one side of each scale. The four combined preferences (one from each scale) create a personality type. For instance, and ESTJ is an Extraverted person who gathers information through her Senses, makes decisions on the basis of Thinking, and likes to use the skills of Judgment (decision-making) more than Perception (information gathering).

How could the MBTI help us understand the gifted? Are there systematic patterns or types which differentiate talented students from the general student population? Are there differences between the types of talented adolescents and talented adults? These were the questions which led to the current research.

TWO GROUPS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

In the first study, the MBTI profiles of talented adolescents from three programs for highly talented students were *(Continued on page 12)*

gathered, a total of 1,725 students. Talented students' preferences were compared with the preferences of a sample of adolescents in the general high school population gathered by Myers (1958). Several strong patterns emerged from the analysis. Among the most important of the findings were the following:

- Almost 50% of the talented students were Extraverts, and 50% Introverts (talented females were somewhat more likely to be Extraverted). About 63% of the high school students were Extraverted.
- Over 75% of the talented sample preferred Intuition; only 32% of the high school group indicated the same preference.
- Talented males and high school males were equally likely to prefer Thinking (64% and 61%, respectively). A majority of females from both groups preferred Feeling, although the rate among talented females was much lower than high school females (talented, 55%; high school, 66%).
- Talented students were more likely to prefer Perceiving (around 61%) than were the high school students (around 46%).

Talented students in this study did have a qualitatively different kind of personality, mostly defined by the difference in a preference for Intuition over Sensing and, to a lesser extent, a preference for Perceiving instead of Judging. There are very practical implications in all four of the above findings.

1) **Equal proportions of talented students prefer Extraversion and Introversion.** One myth perpetuated by the media and popular culture is that *all* talented people are introverted. However, only 50% of the sample in this study indicated a preference for Introversion – hardly an overwhelming proportion! The number of Introverted talented students may only seem to be unusually large in comparison with other high school students, the majority of whom are Extraverted. A broader view of giftedness may be necessary which encompasses outgoing talented students.

2) **Almost three times as many talented students as high school students preferred Intuition over Sensing.** This was the most dramatic difference between the two groups. The difference explains the fascination that talented students have with ideas, while other students like to focus on concrete events. Implications are far-reaching; in the classroom, talented students are more likely to be "turned on" to courses which approach information through the study of theories or possibilities. Other high school students may prefer courses that start with facts and build to theoretical levels – two very different approaches to education. After school, talented students may be drawn to different kinds of activities than their age mates. Their preference for Intuition may draw them toward games that involve inventiveness (perhaps explaining the Dungeons and Dragons craze). Other teen agers will be more likely to prefer games with well-prescribed rules to follow.

Personality (like biology) is not destiny. Talented students – in fact all students – need to recognize the shortcomings of their natural dispositions and to value as acquired skills specific techniques to help them become balanced adults.

A preference for Intuition may also be the source of some curious (and frustrating) blind spots. Because talented students prefer ideas over "what is," they may be prone to overlook the details of everyday life. Everything from the time of day to punctuation will take a back seat to the students' fascination with ideas. In school, the content of a paper is more important than its appearance. Attending to the careful presentation of ideas may require skill development, because it will not come naturally. And in the real world, talented students may become so wrapped up in ideas that they may forget to look at the gas gauge until it's too late.

3) **Equal numbers of males in both groups preferred Thinking over Feeling; similar numbers of talented and high school females preferred Feeling.** Here is a way in which talented are like the general high school population! Most males from both groups tend to make their decisions through objective analysis of information. Most females make decisions by weighing values. Evidently level of ability is not a factor in the selection of these decision-making criteria.

4) **More talented students than high school students prefer Perceiving (gathering information) over Judging (making decisions).** Although this trend was not as strong as Intuition vs. Sensing, it, too, has several implications. First, the unquenchable curiosity of talented students is explained: the quest for information leads to the desire to learn. However, in the enthusiasm for getting more (and more) information, gifted students can delay closure forever (and ever). Meeting deadlines may be difficult for talented students, who would rather explore an idea completely than get a paper in on time. Closing off options of any kind can be problematic for a talented person, who will always prefer to leave the world open to possibilities.

The preferences of talented students tie together many behaviors that seem disconnected, even contradictory. The MBTI explains that the fascination with ideas carries with it a certain carelessness about everyday events – that being open to new possibilities is connected to an aversion for deadlines and closure. So not only do the *(Continued on page 13)*

results of this study demonstrate that talented students have qualitatively different ways of looking at the world, they also serve to provide us with a deeper understanding of the mechanisms which drive diverse behaviors of talented students.

TALENTED STUDENTS/ CREATIVE ADULTS

Having answered the first question, we turn to the second: What do students who are identified by schools a "gifted" or "talented" have in common with adults who are recognized as "creative"? Finding a common link between these two groups could help create a connection between potential in children and achievement among adults.

For the second study, a subset of 168 talented males was drawn from the talented males in the first study. The MBTI types of this group were compared to two other groups: (1) a sample of 116 adult mathematicians, architects, writers, and scientists considered creative by their colleagues (MacKinnon, 1965), and (2) the sample of male adolescents from the general high school population in the first study. Three sets of comparisons were made: talented vs. general high school males, talented high school vs. creative adults, and general high school males vs. creative adults.

The talented males were more similar in their preferences to talented adults than to high school students their own age. Analysis of the individual scales yielded the following results:

- Talented adolescents and adults were more likely to prefer Introversion (58.33% of adolescents and 63.79% of adults); males in the general high school population were more likely to prefer Extraversion (61.91%);
- Almost all talented adult males preferred Intuition (97.41%), as did most of the talented adolescent males (67.26%). In contrast, only 34.11% of males in the general high school population preferred Intuition.
- All three groups of males preferred Thinking over Feeling (61.06% of males in the general high school population; 68.45% of talented male adolescents; and 59.48% of talented male adults). This was the only scale where the majority of men in all three groups indicated the same preference.
- Judging was preferred by 51.98% of males in the general high school population, but by only 30.36% of talented adolescent males and 44.38% of talented adult males.

What do these numbers tell us? Adult or adolescent, the talented males tended to prefer Introversion, Intuition, and Perceiving. Regardless of age, their characteristics led them to explore ideas and possibilities, pursue knowledge, and put ideas together in new ways. Thus, one inference which could be drawn is that personality types are somehow involved with the initiation of creative talent or the drive to create something new.

Second, the preferences which were typical of the high school males were different from the two talented groups: they tended to prefer Extraversion, Sensing, and Judging. So not only were the personality types of the two talented groups alike, they also served to differentiate them from the general population of high school males.

In combination, the results of the two studies provide valuable support for the idea that giftedness is more than observed talent in a given field. They verify the belief that talented students see the world through different eyes, and that this vision may persist to adulthood.

CONCLUSION

Some final points are critical to understanding the results of the two studies. First, even though talented students have the same dispositions as talented adults, **there is a difference between having a disposition and using that disposition to advantage.** Talented students need to learn how to use their inclinations to help them with the creative process. Also, the basic disposition needs the assistance of training in a discipline, motivation, and a supportive environment, to result in the satisfying expression of a talent.

What about the "down side" of these preferences? Are talented students fated to grow up to be absent-minded, forgetful, and messy? Personality (like biology) is not destiny. Talented students – in fact all students – need to recognize the shortcomings of their natural dispositions and to value as acquired skills specific techniques to help them become balanced adults.

Most of all, though, the uncovering of these basic dispositions should create a new level of understanding about the nature of talent. Observed academic talent may be linked to a personality system which is a source of the differences between talented and other students. Similarities between adolescents and adults suggest that these characteristics persist into adulthood and, like an underground spring, may be the unseen support of talent.

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THE HIGHLY GIFTED

Highly Gifted Children and Changing Conceptions of Giftedness

Melissa, age 8, read *Les Miserables* in English. Then she went to the library, obtained a copy of the book in the original French as well as a French-English dictionary, and translated parts of the French version into English, "just for fun – to see how close my translation would be." With such interest and motivation, a Stanford-Binet L-M IQ above 170, and a WISC-R score above 145, Melissa would seem an obvious candidate for any school district's program for the gifted. Yet, when children were selected for a newly-developed program in her district, Melissa was not chosen. The reason? Bored in school, Melissa did not complete required homework or show much interest in academic projects at her grade level. Her teacher would not recommend her for the program, despite the individual IQ scores. The district had adopted the programming approach recommended by Treffinger (1988). In a laudable attempt to be "non-elitist" and *include* children who might not be selected for gifted programs using traditional criteria, such as high test scores, Melissa was systematically *excluded*. The school concurred with Treffinger's position:

> *Does this view of gifted programming dilute the services offered to a small group of 'highly gifted' students, whose needs are presumed to be greatest? I believe not. Such concerns are often based on antiquated conceptions of giftedness which decree students to be more highly gifted – and therefore in greater need or at greater risk – primarily on the basis of IQ scores. Under a more progressive and contemporary view, test scores in themselves do no provide any student an 'entitlement' to service. (Treffinger, 1988, p. 56)*

Melissa's story is true, and illustrates an important concern. Melissa was the unexpected casualty of an otherwise positive goal – that of expanding our definitions of giftedness to include children who might not be identified using traditional measures, and continuing to explore our concept of what intelligence is and what it means to be gifted.

Throughout the 20th century, various conceptions of giftedness have been explored and promoted by psychologists and educators, and occasionally be politicians and the general public as well. Recently developed concepts of giftedness, such as those of Renzulli, Sternberg, Gardner, and Feldman (discussed in detail in Sternberg and Davidson, 1986), focus less on tested ability and more on concrete, creative production and performance. What could be wrong with that? How could such definitions possibly cause a problem for a highly gifted child?

As in many areas of education, the problem lies not so much with theory itself as with how theory is implemented in real schools with real children. Highly gifted children do not always show their abilities in school. Faced with a curriculum that often does not meet their needs, few intellectual peers, and wide discrepancies in development, their response may not be creative products, but behavior problems, depression, or hiding their abilities so that they will be more like the other children. For some of these children, the only hint they will ever give their schools of their extraordinary intellectual ability may be their extremely high test scores.

As part of the difficult transition of theory in practice, it is likely that school personnel have spent time and effort researching theories of giftedness, as well as program models. They may be committed to a particular theory or philosophy – sometimes overcommitted. **Modern myths such as, "IQ doesn't really mean anything anyway" or "You're only gifted if you produce" can be every bit as damaging as the old myth that you are *only* gifted if you have a high test score.** Yet such modern myths abound, inexplicably enough, in many programs that are attempting to *expand* our concepts of giftedness. Children who test extremely high and are also experiencing difficult academic and personal adjustments are particularly at risk. We must make sure that these children are not left out, and that our new definitions of giftedness are indeed expanded and inclusive, and do not simply replace one form of "acceptable" giftedness with another.

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Linda Kreger Silverman

ERSONALITY PLUS

The Joys of Js

In previous columns, I've discussed Introverts ("On Introversion," Perceivers ("Procrastination"), and Intuitive Thinkers ("The Walking Argument"), four of the eight constructs from the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. In this column, I would like to discuss more about a preference that tends to be maligned by the gifted: the Judger. Just the sound of the term makes some people feel uneasy. "A 'Judger' must be someone who goes around judging everybody else all day." Wrong! A Judger (J) is a person who prefers making judgments (decisions) rather than collecting information.

Judgers enjoy planning, setting agendas, determining deadlines, making commitments, organizing their time, and meeting their responsibilities. They are the very essence of "task commitment." You loan your books to Js with total assurance that they remember they borrowed them, they know where they put them, the chances are they will actually read them, they will not spill coffee on them, and they will return them when they are done, probably without having to be asked for them. Sorta nice, isn't it?

The ability to set goals and follow through is associated with strength of character, will and determination. Olympic champions, prodigies, and other highly productive members of our society are Js. Their excellent organizational abilities enable Js to use their gifts effectively. Unfortunately, Judgers do tend to get exasperated with Perceivers (Ps) who are not as responsible. So, perhaps, the fear that Ps have of the judgments of Js is somewhat justified.

As Shelagh Gallagher points out in this issue: the majority of gifted teens are Perceivers. The majority of their parents, however, may be Js! At least, this is what we have found in our studies of families at the Gifted Child Development Center. For the past several years, we have been giving the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* regularly to families who come for counseling. I have found the J/P differentiation between parents and children in gifted families to be rather puzzling, since it seems that the parents are just as gifted as their children. Is it possible that teen-age Ps grow up to be Js?

We haven't conducted any longitudinal investigations of gifted children, so I can't answer that question. But my hunch is that with maturity comes responsibility, and that in adulthood Ps probably take on J-like qualities in order to survive. Of all the personality factors, I believe J may be the most susceptible to developmental progression.

At this point, a discussion of **strength** of a specific preference appears to be in order. Underachievers in our studies have had extremely high P scores. Perhaps in rebellion against parents with extremely high J scores?? Too much of a good thing can turn a positive trait into a negative in either direction. Although not necessarily true of the other three dimensions in the typology, it seems that the ideal state in this dimension is half P/half J. The Perceiver in oneself can play, be spontaneous, be flexible, and postpone decision-making while amassing all kinds of information. The Judger in oneself can set goals, make decisions, organize effectively, avoid distractions, get the job done, and be counted upon to fulfill commitments. The well-rounded adult needs both parts.

Linda Silverman, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and Director of the Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, Colorado.

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Martha Morelock

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS:

The Prodigy Phenomenon *(Part II)*

In the first column, I wrote about the factors combining to "make' a child prodigy. In this column, I discuss some problems faced by prodigies and their families.

It is the norm among families of prodigies for parents to sacrifice much in the interest of the prodigy's development. Wang Shiqiang, the father of Chinese child prodigy artist, Wang Yani, gave up his own painting so as not to influence his daughter's work and artistic development (Ho, 1989). Likewise, Moshe Menuhin, the father of prodigy violinist Yehudi Menuhin, sacrificed his job so that the family could move closer to a desired teacher for Yehudi (Rolfe, 1978). Such sacrifices are typically made willingly and even enthusiastically because the unique power and specialness of the prodigy's gift is seen as being of primary importance.

Though many prodigies are only children, if siblings do exist, they typically come to share the parental view as to the primariness of the prodigy's needs. In some circumstances, limited family resources may result in sibling talent going relatively unsupported. Or it may be channeled differently because of the prodigy's presence in the home. Yehudi Menuhin's younger sisters, Hepzibah and Yalta, for example, were believed by many to be equally as talented as Yehudi. Yet, when Hepzibah wanted to play the violin like her older brother, her parents encouraged her to take up piano instead, since Yehudi needed an accompanyist. When Yalta expressed interest in the piano, she was frequently told it was better to make herself useful around the house, since the family didn't need another musician. Neither Hepzibah nor Yalta, however, appeared resentful (Rolfe, 1978).

For prodigies themselves, of course, their passionate commitment to their chosen fields has serious implications. Little time may be left for friendships with agemates. Additionally, there is inevitably the problem of finding some common ground for a friendship, given that the prodigy's intensely focused interest is one which generally cannot be shared by other children. Friends may thus become limited to a few others sharing a special interest in the prodigy's talent field.

Close parental involvement is needed to assure a prodigy's continuing development. Moreover, lack of outside friendships may result in a prodigy's leaning heavily on parents as companions and confidants. Typically, this intense parental involvement results in a longer period of dependence for prodigies than is the norm for other children (Feldman, 1986). Consequently, the issue of separation may loom larger for the prodigy and his parents than is the case in other families. As the child prodigy moves toward adulthood and the unavoidable end of the "prodigy years," mixed feelings may be aroused in both child and parent. For the child, it signifies the end of an era of undeniable specialness in the eyes of the world. For the parent, it means the impending loss of the long-held central position as coordinator and catalyst of the child's development. Such poignant aspects of the prodigy phenomenon are capsulized by Fred Waitzkin (1984) in his book, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*, an account of his son Josh's years as a chess prodigy:

> *Josh . . . was growing up. In a few more years, people wouldn't make such a big deal of it when he beat grownups in Washington Square. Maybe by then he would be embarrassed to have his father hovering over his games like a protective hen. What would I do with my Saturday afternoons? (Waitzkin, 1984, p. 222)*

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Martha Morelock, is a doctoral candidate in Child Study at the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study, Tufts University

IN SEARCH OF
SERENDIPITY

Winston Churchill once said, "Personally, I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught." How many creatively gifted students there are who are kindred spirits with Churchill! Gifted students are eager to learn but often in their own fashion and at their own speed. The good news for creative learners is that they have their whole lives before them to learn incredible things. Moreover, most of life's learning adventures are not of the schoolhouse variety they often find distasteful. The five explorations suggested here may not suit the particular desires or needs of every student, but they may suggest other topics and processes that will captivate and excite creative youth. For convenience of use, each exploration is written as a student prompt.

Exploration One. What is your geology I.Q.? How much do you know about the land upon which you live and the earth features you can see on the horizon? What is the geological history of the piece of ground you call home? Was it once a shallow sea or a glacier or both? When and how were the rivers and lakes in your region created? Explore and inquire. What do the geological terms "bedrock," "talus," "fault," and "alluvium" mean? What are the various divisions of the field of geology (e.g., paleontology)? A local geology club may be of interest to you, or perhaps a local college geology club has meetings you can attend. Begin learning about the exciting field of geology today.

Exploration Two. What do you know about the weather? What are some of the key factors that create typical weather conditions where you live? Do you know the meaning behind weather-related proverbs such as "Red sky at night, sailors' delight; red sky at morning, sailors take warning"? Do you know what "sun dogs" are or why people celebrate Ground Hog's Day? Learn all you can about the exciting and fascinating world of weather and weather forecasting.

Exploration Three. How much do you know about the challenging and rewarding world of photography? Millions of people around the world find photography to be a creative profession or hobby. What are the origins of photography? Who are some of the great photographers and photojournalists? What professions make significant use of photography? How can you avail yourself of the joys of photography? Contact a local photography club and attend one of the meetings. Attend a photography exhibition at a local art gallery or museum. Write to Eastman Kodak Company, 343 State Street, Rochester, NY 14650 and ask for helpful information about how you can join the millions of other people who have found great satisfaction from the use of the camera.

Exploration Four. Immerse yourself in the exciting world of architecture. Begin by determining the meaning and the origin of the word "architecture." Learn the meaning of architectural terms such as "cupola," "facade," "dormer," "frieze," and "pilaster." Determine the predominant styles of architecture found in your community and country. Next, take an architectural tour of your community. What architectural styles are found among the homes, offices, churches, and synagogues in your community? While you are enjoying this exploration, don't *(Continued on page 18)*

ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

Did you ever wonder what the inhabitants of the 22nd century will think of us when they dig up our civilization? Will they realize that those golden arches actually caused millions of people to salivate? Will they understand that the teenage mutant ninja turtles were not real? Will they search for evidence of action to accompany the miles of butcher paper with funny headings like "brainstorming" and "strategic planning"?

Will future educational leaders view the 90's as a dark age or will they be impressed with our insights into individual needs of children? Will they be puzzled as to why we gave students labels like "gifted and talented" and "learning disabled" rather than merely providing children with whatever educational programs they require?

Somewhere in some remote archives a citizen of 2100 will uncover such headlines as: "Four administrators leave school district for positions in business"; "State loses 'flagship' program for gifted students"; "Budget deficits force elimination of programs for special students." Surely that future historian will questions the value placed on education in the late 20th century.

And here we are back in 1990 discussing educational reform and the restructuring of schools. What have we learned in our own century about the variance in children's needs? Are we afraid to break the paradigm of traditional learning? Have we become so inflexible that educators with vision are leaving in frustration? Perhaps our budget planners have forgotten the product: individual student development.

> *The traditional model of schooling is...incompatible with the idea that students are workers, that learning must be active, and that children learn in different ways and at different rates. The factory—rather than a moral, learning community—is the inspiration for the traditional model. When the factory was touted as the ideal organization for work and when most youngsters were headed for its assembly lines, making a mass public education system conform to the model of a factory may have seemed like a great achievement.... The limitations of America's traditional factory model of education have become manifest, and they are crippling. (Shanker, 1990, p. 350)*

Gifted children do indeed learn differently and at different rates. Traditional education is crippling for them. There is no one appropriate curriculum for all students. We need to evaluate each child and determine the learning process that works best for him or her. If we truly individualize education, then all children will be considered special; we won't cut programs they require.

"They had some problems in the 1990's, but they laid the groundwork for the innovative and excellent education of the next century. They really cared about kids." Someone in the next 100 years may look beyond the arches and the green turtles and the butcher paper. I hope so.

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Dorothy Knopper is State Consultant on the Gifted, Colorado Department of Education and "Open Space" columnist for *Roeper Review*.

(CREATIVE VENTURES Continued from page 17) forget to learn about the exciting careers associated with architecture.

Exploration Five. How often do you hear yourself say, "I wish I had more time"? Just what is time and why do we keep track of it? How old is time? When did time begin? Consider time from a variety of perspectives: time as it relates to a giant sequoia tree, a basketball player, a bird, a chef, an historian. Also explore the many ways humans have created to tell time. What are some landmark events in the history of clocks? Where is the world's most precise timeclock to be found? When were time zones created? What is carbon dating and who uses it? What does a dendrochronologist do? What role does time play in the world's great religions? Don't lose time, explore it!

Other explorations on which creative students may embark may include learning about Chinese cooking, hot air ballooning, or the exciting mathematics discipline of topology. Encourage the creative youth you know to begin an exploration today. Help these youth realize that life's true elixir is found in the sheer and unadulterated joy of learning.

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and editor of *GIT News*.

Lisa Ferguson

from parent to parent

Isn't it amazing how the same two parents can produce two very different children? Sure, there are some similarities but,...we are always fascinated and frustrated by the differences in personality and style of learning that we see in our children.

Ruth and Jim Mueller, Marston Mills, Massachusetts, have two boys that seem to be a good example of this. Carl, 11, and Bart, 7, are both left-handed and both gifted, but that seems to be where the similarities end.They may hold their pencils with the same hand and approach the paper from the same angle, but as Ruth attests, they approach learning very differently.

"Carl requires teachers with warm, outgoing personalities. He has an investment in getting along; he needs to feel in tune with the teacher. He has deeper emotional swings and I think that affects his schoolwork. If a teacher says something slightly negative, or just points out a wrong answer, there will be a setback and Carl will be more reluctant to jump back in. Bart would be more likely to shrug and say 'OK, I'll throw that away and start over'."

Ruth isn't sure whether their learning styles affect their personality or vice versa but the resulting contrasts are often comical. Both boys have learned to iron their shirts, a routine task that highlights the distinction.

"Bart would do it in the usual methodical way: front, sides, back, and remember to shut the iron off. Carl will start by setting the iron on the wrong end of the board, ironing the back (the biggest flat area) first, twist the shirt all around forgetting one side or a sleeve, and end by leaving the iron on."

Their opposite natures mean they have opposite talents and need to practice opposite skills.

"Carl is more abstract and more the leader. The other kids always want to be with him. One problem for him is that you can't be the leader in the classroom because the teacher is.

"Bart is more practical and more the follower. Because of that, he is not as likely to become unhappy with his schoolwork and less likely to express it to his teacher.

"Carl needs to learn how to follow, and Bart has to learn to lead."

Parent to Parent is your forum for sharing ideas with other parents of gifted children. We want to hear your story—what has worked, or not worked, for your family. Please send your name, address, and phone number to Understanding Our Gifted, P.O. Box 3489, Littleton, CO 80161, and we will contact you for details.

Lisa Ferguson is from Haverill, Massachusetts and the parent of highly gifted children.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN GLOBAL AWARENESS

Global Awareness Division of the National Association for Gifted Children will be convening November 14-15, in Little Rock, AR, before the annual NAGC convention, Nov. 16-18. New leadership is needed to continue the development of this division. For more information, contact Linda Silverman, Co-Chair, at (303) 837-8378.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT

Advanced Development, the first journal on adult giftedness, will be publishing its third annual volume in January, 1991. The theme of the issue is "The Possible Human," featuring the work of Jean Houston. Subscription rate is currently $15 for individuals or institutions. Contact Snowpeak Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 3489, Littleton, CO 80161 for further information. (Current subscribers will be sent renewal notices in the next few months.)

Intertel Foundation, Inc.—1991 Hollingworth Award Competition

This $2000 award is presented annually for proposed research in the field of the education or psychology of gifted children and youth, and is open to individuals as well as educational organizations. Deadline for submission of proposals is January 15, 1991. Application information may be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Dr. Roxanne H. Cramer, Chairman, Hollingworth Award Committee, 4300 Sideburn Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030.

FOCUS:

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

A PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN GIFTED EDUCATION
Dr. Holly M. Hultgren

THE PULLOUT: STILL A USEFUL PROGRAM MODEL?
Dr. Suzanne H. McDaniel

What we must reach for is a conception of perpetual self-discovery, perpetual reshaping to realize one's best self, to be the person one could be.

—John W. Gardner

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November-December, 1990

Volume 3, Issue 2

The Principal's Role in Gifted Education

Holly M. Hultgren, Ed.D.

After being out of the public school arena for nearly ten years working as a university faculty member and gifted program administrator, it was with great anticipation and high expectation that I accepted the offer of an elementary school principalship. Though I had been working closely with gifted students, teaching teachers, consulting with school districts, and conducting research, this new role offered unique opportunities. The school from which I draw my examples is set in a rural, mountain community, 20 miles from the closest urban center. Its nearly 500 students, kindergarten through sixth grade, comprise a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and ability levels.

Research supports the following assumptions about the role of a building administrator in today's public school. These statements will be used as a framework for citing specific strategies which support gifted education at the school level:

The building administrator must:

- **have a vision for the future**
- **be a change agent**

(Continued on page 7)

FOCUS ON:

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

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The Pullout: Still a Useful Program Model?

Suzanne H. McDaniel

A central concern of education today is how to structure schools in order to allow more effective decision-making and delivery of instruction. This concern has been a continuing one in gifted education because of the influence the administrative setting or program model has on both the nature and quality of the instructional program. Descriptions of types of program models which schools and districts might use to serve gifted students abound in the literature. One model frequently featured in discussion of gifted programming is the pullout. Over the past few years, the use of this model has produced some controversy, raising the question of whether it continues to have any usefulness as a means of serving our ablest learners.

The Controversy

The pullout model is one of the oldest and most commonly used program models in the United States, particularly at the elementary level. In the pullout model, gifted students are pulled out of their regular classroom settings for a designated amount of time each day or each week to attend a special

(Continued on page 9)

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FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

I have always been optimistic about the future of gifted education, but recent events in education have caused me to be deeply concerned. In the last few months, I have witnessed a massive movement throughout the United States to eliminate needed services for the gifted. In the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, gifted education has been accused of being racist, which is totally untrue, since districts have worked for 2 decades to achieve equitable representation of minority groups in their gifted programs. Gifted education has enhanced the motivation and aspirations of countless minority children.

Ability grouping has come under severe attack; zealots of Cooperative Learning claim that mixed ability groups are best for **all** children. However, research on cooperative learning has consistently **excluded** handicapped and gifted children, focusing on 90% of students in the mid-range. There is not a single study comparing the progress of gifted students in cooperative learning groups with their progress in gifted programs. Tracking in the mid-range of abilities has not proved useful, but there is substantial research that ability grouping (which is not the same as tracking) **enhances** learning and motivation for gifted students.

The fallout of this Zeitgeist of the '90s has been dramatic: honors courses have been cut in major cities, exemplary programs for the gifted have been eliminated, teacher certification has been lost in some states, state and local funding has been greatly reduced, gifted coordinators have been demoted to regular classroom positions, state consultants on the gifted have been undermined, and the position of every person who works in this field is currently in jeopardy. Scapegoating of the gifted and those who serve them is at an all time high. In the name of School Reform, school boards have adopted the policy that the heterogeneous classroom can serve everyone. **It has become politically untenable for administrators to support special provisions for the gifted.**

Gifted children are the sacrificial lambs of the new movement in school reform. But bringing the top down does not bring the bottom up, and nothing is gained in the name of democracy by holding back our brightest students. In fact, our democracy, as well as our position as a world leader, is being endangered by these policies. While other countries enable their brightest students to go as far as possible in their learning, we have adopted the notion that one curriculum fits all, and are using our most capable students to serve as assistant teachers instead of allowing them to progress and develop their abilities.

The situation is alarming. Unless those who recognize the special needs of the gifted unite and mobilize their energies to preserve gifted education, all of the gains of the last 20 years may be lost in the '90s.

Linda Silverman

Understanding Our Gifted

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Martha J. Morelock

HE HIDDEN GIFTED LEARNER

Judging Giftedness by Behavioral Criteria — *A Cautionary Tale*

Hi! Perhaps you are used to seeing my name attached to the Bright Beginnings column. For the next several issues at least, however, I will be writing about The Hidden Gifted Learner. Topics will include the disadvantaged and culturally different gifted child. With this issue, I begin my exploration of this multi-faceted topic with another form of hidden giftedness...

Reservations about the use of test scores in identifying giftedness have led to arguments for the use of behavioral criteria. Renzulli (1978), for example, proposed that one look for signs of gifted behavior—a combination of above-average (but not necessarily superior) ability, task-commitment, and creativity.

The idea of using behavioral criteria in judging childrens' abilities has merit. It allows for more certainty that children whose test scores are depressed because of cultural differences or economic disadvantage are not missed. Nevertheless, behavioral information can spawn faulty conclusions if not used carefully.

Consider 10-year-old Jerry Matthews. When Jerry brought home his first report card from the new school where he was beginning fifth grade, his mother sensed that his B grade in math was a sign deserving attention. She was aware that Jerry scored at the 99th percentile in math achievement tests in the fourth grade and that Jerry enjoyed math. Nevertheless, she wrestled with herself, Jerry was adjusting to a new school and besides, a B is a perfectly respectable grade. She did not want to be pegged as a pushy parent unwilling to accept anything less than stellar A's.

Jerry himself provided no clarification on the matter and finally, Mrs. Matthews' intuitive side won out. She called Mr. Carter, her son's math teacher. The ensuing conversation went like this:

Mrs. Matthews: Mr. Carter, I'm calling to ask about Jerry's performance in math. I'm a little concerned about the B on his report card. From Jerry's past work, I know that he's capable of doing better.

Mr. Carter: Oh, Mrs. Matthews, Jerry's performance is just fine. He does good work and understands the math concepts, although it takes him a while and he's slow in getting the work in. A's are reserved for the children completing the usual class assignment and going on to do extra credit work.

The conversation with Mr. Carter did not allay Mrs. Matthew's concerns. In fact, it made her more confused. She agreed to talk with Jerry and to call the teacher back. The conversation with Jerry went like this:

Mrs. Matthews: Jerry, have you found math to be harder this year?

Jerry: No, Mom, why?

Mrs. Matthews: Mr. Carter says that you are doing well, but you are slow in getting your work done. Why is that?

Jerry: Well, Mom, usually when he hands it out, I look at it and I know I can do it fast. So I just wait until the last minute and do it and turn it in.

Mrs. Matthews: But Jerry, why don't you do the work quickly and then go on to do the extra credit work?

Jerry: Well, I tried that once, but the extra credit work was just more of the same stuff and since I already knew it, I didn't see why I should do more of it.

On the basis of classroom behavior, Jerry appeared to be a competent, though not outstanding student—certainly not as able or task-committed as those completing the assignments and electing to do more. It was only through considering past test scores and performance that a truer picture of Jerry's hidden giftedness came into view. When Mr. Carter volunteered to incorporate more advanced math assignments into Jerry's curriculum, Jerry's classroom performance quickly began to reflect his abilities.

Behavioral information, like test scores, should be used only with caution and with full awareness of the possibility of misinterpretation. One might do well to recall a certain wise old adage: You can't always judge a book by its cover.

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Martha Morelock, is a doctoral candidate in Child Study at the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study, Tufts University.

Elizabeth Meckstroth

PARENTING

Grass Roots Gifted

Trying to change a school system can be as easy as moving a graveyard! Reforms can be made, though, using the effort required to turn a battleship—one degree at a time. Most school personnel lack the training and experience needed to provide appropriate school services for gifted children. This void is depicted in an interview in *USA Today* with two teachers nominated for the All-USA Academic Team:

> Q: Will an outstanding student thrive no matter what kind of school he or she attends? Does the quality of the school make a difference?
>
> A: I think that he could thrive no matter what kind of school..... These kids teach themselves, whether they have a great teacher or a mediocre teacher. A lot of these kids, you could just give them the books. I think a good student can survive even terrible instruction. Good students seem to be self-motivated. So a good school could just encourage and nurture that individual. (Students must learn to reach for new ideas, 1989)

The prevalent delusion that gifted children can make it on their own persists. Parents usually know their children best. If they do not strive to improve school systems, who will?

Here are some ways to begin turning policy and practices:

- **Approach school personnel with the goal of advocating for the learning needs of every student.** Gifted education is a cutting edge in serving all students.
- **Organize a support group for parents of gifted children.** Develop a constituency to validate your cause and broaden the base to acquire and disseminate information. Some member functions under your parent group auspices can be:
  - » **Network with other parent support groups to multiply your effectiveness.**
  - » **Create obvious service to schools.** This could be providing Great Books or Picture Lady programs, help in the office, library assistance, etc.
  - » **Show up!** Get to know the players. Be visible at school administrative and policy meetings.
  - » **Find something mutually beneficial to support.** Do something to facilitate their priorities!
  - » **Find out who your friends are in the policy making and administrative gamut and focus your efforts with them.** *(Who has a gifted grandchild?!)* Influence fence sitters, but don't waste time trying to transform your enemies!
  - » **Accumulate a library of resources about gifted children.**
  - » **Serve administrators and policy makers with information:** Join national, state, and other local gifted organizations. Attend meetings and develop relationships with some influential people in the gifted field. Obtain newsletters and copy information about legislation, budgets and other items pertinent to your cause. Send them to your superintendents, principals, school board members, etc. with a friendly note attached that implies that you share their bottom line concerns: numbers!
  - » **Identify good things in place in the school.** Support student use of existing options such as independent study time in the library, attending a higher grade math class, grouping similar achievement level students to learn together.
  - » **Identify a service for gifted children which can easily emanate from within the existing school organization.** Offer a plan and help to create one change.
  - » **Look beyond the school walls for resources to access such as mentors and tutors from the high school National Honor Society, Senior Citizen groups, or service groups.**

Here are a few more bulletins from the front lines and trenches:

- **Influence with the authority of research.** Meeting with school administrators and staff to advocate changes for gifted children may reveal, "All our children are gifted." or, "We have a policy against acceleration." Ask that about two weeks be allowed between meetings to gather more information about the expressed needs and possibilities. Distribute copies of articles and book pages with highlighted statements supporting proposed changes.
- **Consult with your children.** They are the real experts about what they need!
- **Never underestimate the power of one person and an idea.** *(Read the history of women's rights!)*
- **Evaluate your progress.** Ask, "Is it working?"
- **Share success stories.** Never give up. Smile!

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Elizabeth Meckstroth is a therapist and consultant in Evanston, Illinois and one of the authors of the award-winning book, ***Guiding the Gifted Child.***

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Karen C. Nelson

Higher Level Thinking Skills for the Gifted: *A Taxonomy of Thinking Skills*

Although more sophisticated approaches to higher level thinking skills may be found, Bloom's Taxonomy is a good one for parents and teachers of the gifted to know because it is widely taught in regular teacher education. Its simplicity makes it easy to remember and use in designing and evaluating learning materials and instruction for the gifted.

A taxonomy is a hierarchy: the simplest skill (*knowledge*, in this case) appears at the bottom of the taxonomy; the most complex *(evaluation)* is at the top. Bloom's Taxonomy includes six levels:

Higher level skills—

- evaluation
- synthesis
- analysis

Foundation skills—

- application
- comprehension
- knowledge.

Most time in the average classroom is spent on the foundation skills of *knowledge* and *comprehension*, with *application* often the highest skill exercised. Critics of our schools say that virtually all students need more emphasis on the higher level thinking skills of *analysis, synthesis and evaluation* than they are presently getting.

Gifted students, especially, should be taught to exercise their minds at the higher levels of the taxonomy, since this is where their special abilities will be challenged and developed. Which is not to say the knowledge/comprehension levels should be slighted with the gifted. However, their excellent memories make it possible for them to accomplish learning at these levels two to five times faster than average learners. A common mistake teachers make is to think that supplemental work for rapid learners should be more of the same—more learning of facts and information (knowledge acquisition). What our able learners most need is supplemental learning opportunities that develop higher level thinking skills. Mental work at these levels can rescue good minds from boredom.

Understanding the Levels of the Taxonomy

Read these brief explanations of the six levels, then see if you can match each of the levels with one of the study questions below:

1. **Knowledge** - knowing facts and information
2. **Comprehension** - understanding what you know

   (These first two levels can be hard to separate)
3. **Application** - using information
4. **Analysis** - dissecting a whole into components
5. **Synthesis** - putting two or more things together to form a whole
6. **Evaluation** - appraising; forming judgments

STUDY QUESTIONS

A. List your spelling words.

B. Define your spelling words.

C. Compare a house built in 1990 with one built in 1980.

D. Design a school system for a colony on Mars.

E. Rank current world leaders according to their importance, from your point of view.

F. Perform the science experiment described in the text.

(To check your answers turn to the Bulletin Board section of the back cover.)

Applying the Taxonomy

If you were able to correctly match the six items in the exercise above, you were demonstrating *knowledge* and *comprehension* of the taxonomy. One way to *apply* the taxonomy would be to look at a homework assignment for your child. Try to categorize the questions asked to see what levels of thinking skills are elicited. Or examine a textbook, looking at the problems in a chapter or the study questions at the end of the chapter. How many levels of the taxonomy are represented? Are foundation skills or higher level skills emphasized? Better yet, teach the taxonomy to a gifted student or group of students and have them join you in *analyzing* instructional content by using the taxonomy.

Subsequent installments of this column will discuss what is an appropriate knowledge/comprehension base for the gifted and how to develop higher level thinking skills in our gifted.

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Stephanie S. Tolan

HE READING ROOM

Welcome back to the Reading Room. This visit and next we'll talk about a problem we're asked about frequently—finding books appropriate for very young, precocious readers. Children who began reading at three or four have outgrown the simplified vocabulary and sentence structure of early readers before they enter kindergarten. They need reading materials with a genuine richness of language and a story of sufficient complexity to challenge their minds and their reading ability—in short, what they would call real books. But few four and five year olds, no matter how advanced their reading ability, are emotionally ready for the serious literature written for middle grade students. They need works that fit their emotional as well as their intellectual age, and books with this combination are rare.

Publishers have recently increased production of transitional books that may fill this need. Called chapter books, or first chapter books, these are short *(approximately 64 pages)*, contain brief chapters *(usually 8 or 10)* and include illustrations *(1 or 2 per chapter)*. They are available in hardback or paperback, the latter being easily affordable, and they seem to be selling well enough to their target audience of second and third graders that they constitute a kind of boomlet in children's books. Though Random House and Little Brown were among the leaders in this boomlet, other publishers have followed suit. There is a great variety of titles.

In this category there are a few works of serious realistic fiction, some historical fiction, an occasional fantasy, and a fair sampling of humorous contemporary stories. In the latter group, the sales and earning potential of popular fiction have created a boomlet within a boomlet. There is in this genre a growing number of books that are younger versions of pop fiction, light, humorous, and shallow, *(literary potato chips, lots of fun but lacking nutrition)*, which kids are likely to find on their own as they have found the Babysitters Club books. As we monitor our children's consumption of junk foods and offer plenty of nutritious alternatives, adults need to look carefully to find balanced literary nutrition in these first explorations into the world of real books.

A title which could be considered a touchstone for nutritional quality is Clyde Robert Bulla's *The Chalk Box Kid*. A Random House Stepping Stone Book, it is written with the depth and sensitivity Bulla is known for—serious literature for the youngest readers. The charcoal drawings of Thomas B. Allen fit the story, complimenting its soft but tough humanity. Gregory, just turned nine, is an artist. Newly moved to a small house in a working class neighborhood, a stranger at his new school, and feeling pushed out of his own space by an uncle who has moved into his room, Gregory finds sanctuary in a burned out building behind his house. Once a chalk factory, the building offers Gregory blackened walls and discarded bits of chalk, and he begins to create there a small world of his own. As in many other stories of a child with a special gift, Gregory's gift exemplifies his independence and strength. It is his art that builds bridges that connect him at last with the people and world around him. The relationships and the characters in this book are far more complex than its size would suggest, and the happy ending is both fulfilling and believable.

In our next visit, we'll suggest a number of other first chapter books, some serious, some funny, that can serve to send our youngest readers exploring the world of books on their own.

Stephanie Tolan, from Waterford, New York, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child*.

- **be an instructional leader**
- **be a facilitator of collaboration**
- **be a resource manager.**

Current literature lists these administrative roles as essential for improving education in the schools of today. Volumes have been written about each of these topics. In this brief article, I would like to use these categories to focus on how a principal can support education for gifted students, while at the same time establishing standards of excellence for the entire school.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Undoubtedly the most critical job of a building principal is to communicate a clear vision of the direction in which the school is going. A vision statement is usually formulated by the combined best thinking of the many and varied constituencies in the school community. Its focus should be forward looking, based on future trends, and idealistic. This is where educators, parents and students can share their impassioned images of what might be. Creativity is essential. High standards and personalized teaching approaches should always be considered. Because the school vision embraces education for all students, it should, therefore, include specific considerations for the most capable in the population. Setting sights as high as possible will benefit all students and will certainly address those students who, all too often, are left to their own devices to find challenge and stimulation. Schools should be committed to seeking opportunities to enhance learning for all students. At our particular school a focus on math, science and environmental education were combined with a theme of respect and responsibility for self and others. Whether it be teaching new technologies, addressing difficult problems, or reaching into the future, schools should establish a vision which prepares students to deal effectively with the world in which they live.

CHANGE AGENT

Because the trend in the 1990s is toward more site-based decision making in education, schools are being given increased autonomy to design programs tailored to their unique needs. If improvement in the area of program delivery for gifted students is desirable, the principal must provide leadership to implement the changes. A building G/T Committee (including teachers, parents, administrators) should begin by assessing needs and setting goals and objectives that can be implemented using the personnel and resources available to the school. Short and long term planning are encouraged. Realistic timelines should be established so that monitoring and evaluation are possible. Permit those teachers who are most knowledgeable and supportive to begin the efforts. Others will feel more comfortable as they see projects and programs for gifted students growing. Document and publicize activities and accomplishments. Communicate clearly and frequently with parents so that they are aware of their child's gifted programming. Be sure to share information about the gifted program within the context of meeting needs of all students in the school and build support for its activities as one would any other program which promotes excellence in your school.

Parent input should be solicited in the identification process, and followed up during the specialized program planning phase.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

Perhaps the most enjoyable part of my job as a principal is working to improve the quality of instruction in the school. This begins with the hiring of the most highly qualified teachers available. In addition to finding a person who will fit the school and grade level team setting, there are some specific characteristics a principal can look for in master teachers. They are well organized, highly intelligent, flexible, self confident, broad in perspective, process oriented, creative, appreciative of gifted students, positive, set high standards for behavior and quality of thinking, and demonstrate a sense of humor. During an interview observation and/or reference check, specific references to how the teacher individualizes for gifted students can be investigated.

All teachers should develop a professional growth plan which is monitored and supported by the principal. Teachers should be encouraged to gain expertise in specific content areas or teaching techniques for gifted students. Administrative enthusiasm and support for staff development classes, conference attendance, and graduate study encourage teachers to improve their teaching ability. All school personnel should be comfortable in the role of learner as well as facilitator of learning. Selection of specific curriculum materials, articulation between grade levels and schools, encouragement to integrate concepts, flexible scheduling, and creative uses of materials and spaces can be enhanced by a principal who is sensitive to the needs of professional teachers.

Awareness of the needs of parents to know about and understand the educational goals for gifted students is essential. Parent input should be solicited in the identification process, and followed up during the specialized program planning phase. Many schools provide evening sessions for parents of gifted students to discuss parenting questions. Discussion centers primarily around meeting the needs of gifted students in the home, sibling difficulties, social adjustment and outside of school enrichment opportunities. This would also be a great forum to share with other schools in the neighborhood and might even serve to provide a basis for establishing a district parent support group for the gifted.

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Evaluation of student progress is going through a stage of transition in schools today. Principals should encourage use of off-level testing, alternative assessment instruments, independent study projects, and creative demonstrations of student learning, when appropriate. Being aware of the research in the area of differentiated curriculum, ability grouping, social/emotional needs of gifted students, to mention a few topics, should be a goal of the administrator. Instructional leadership is one area in which the creativity of the principal can greatly affect the outcome of visioning and working toward change at the school level.

FACILITATOR OF COLLABORATION

Collaboration of efforts and energies always results in a better product. The building principal sets the tone for input from a variety of groups. In the case of gifted education, the students, their parents and teachers should be consulted. Often the media specialist, music, art and physical education teachers have different perspectives and creative insights to offer. Collaborative planning takes time. It is critically important to give educators the gift of time to work together in grade level or departmental teams to maximize planning efforts. Whenever possible, the school psychologist or counselor should be included in the overall planning scheme so that the social/emotional needs of gifted students are considered. Creative ideas for integrating subject areas, compacting curriculum, grouping by ability for special instruction, organizing longer blocks of instructional time, and developing new resources, result from collaborative planning. Making contacts with members of the business community to set up mentorships or internship placements for students helps make learning more relevant. The principal can encourage guest speakers or special presentations that stimulate new curricular or career discussions. The principal's role in encouraging collaboration among members of the educational community comes from a desire to develop partnerships between the best and most capable resources available.

RESOURCE MANAGER

During the present period of declining resources in education, the need to get the most for every program dollar is essential. If site-based management means determining the priorities at each building, grade level, and classroom, then the dollars available should follow the recognized needs. Programs for gifted students generally have a great cost benefit to the school community at large. Such programs should never be cut based on the commonly heard rationale, "they can make it on their own." Some ideas such as acceleration, cluster grouping, compacting and mentorships add little or no additional cost to the school.

> ***...share information about the gifted program within the context of meeting needs of all students in the school and build support for its activities as one would any other program which promotes excellence in your school.***

An excellent use of small amounts of the building budget might be to invest in books and journals to help keep teachers and parents abreast of the latest trends in gifted education. Every school should have a professional library which spans the range of educational issues important today. These might serve as inspiration for parent discussion groups or topics to be addressed during faculty meetings or staff development days. Also, written resources for gifted students should be available on the library shelves. Many fine student materials are currently on the market, though caution is advised in discriminating among the many materials marketed for gifted students only.

Frequently, grant monies can be solicited to support the acquisition of new technologies or enrichment opportunities in specialized areas of study. Our school has received outside funding to support extensive habitat study projects, nature trail development, comparative weather measurement, and literature book acquisition. Funding for these projects greatly benefits gifted students with interests in these areas.

Many schools also set aside a small amount of funding for students to participate in competitions. Whether it be Odyssey of the Mind, poster art contest, a stock market simulation or a computer competition, all students are encouraged to try their hand at competitive events.

Teachers should also be encouraged to develop innovative ideas to improve instruction in the classroom or develop new resources needed to expand students' experiences. An environment which is open and positive—a climate which invites new ideas—will result in better learning. Our school district foundation encourages teachers to develop and share ideas by providing mini-grants on a competitive basis. Many gifted students have benefitted from the funds received. Frequently, students and parents are involved in the development of the proposed projects.

Finally, schools should seek partnerships with local businesses and agencies. In the course of two years, three of our students and their teachers were selected to participate in an intensive space study experience, including an all expense paid tour of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. These students were among our most capable and articulate and were able to share their experience and enthusiasm with others, resulting in a school-wide space fair. Additionally, two students were selected to be student news

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broadcasters for a local public T.V. station. They interviewed members of the school community and delivered a top flight news broadcast about our school events. Other students were selected to be local weather watchers, thereby assuming the responsibility of monitoring and reporting the weather conditions from our remote area. A wonderful pairing experience with sixth graders and various businesses or senior citizens in our local community enabled students to gain first hand experience and make personal contacts on a weekly basis. **Life skills and appreciation of others are lessons learned through community service experiences.**

CONCLUSION

In school districts where site-based management and decision making are being encouraged, there is a greater burden of responsibility on the building administrator and staff to deliver a quality educational program for students. With this burden comes greater autonomy and need to be sensitive to the needs of the local school community. Goal setting and planning can be much more specialized and hopefully will result in creative, meaningful decision making. Sharing ideas, concerns and questions with other principals in the district is essential to provide the nurturance, support and collegiality needed in this somewhat isolated position. There is an increased need to work together with resources in the community to enhance the school program as budgets become tighter. A spirit of collaboration between student representatives, teachers working in teams, parents on councils and committees, and the building principal, will result in higher quality educational programs for all. The building principal is in the key position to make it happen!

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The Pullout *(Continued from page 1)*

class held in a resource room or resource center. Usually the pullout or resource class is taught by someone who has had special training in gifted education. The class provides gifted students with an opportunity to work with gifted peers in units of study designed specifically for them.

In recent years the pullout model has been widely criticized as an inadequate approach to meeting the needs of gifted students. The nation-wide study of gifted programs conducted by the Sid W. Richardson Foundation concluded that the pullout model was symptomatic of a patchwork approach to serving the gifted, a part-time solution to a full-time problem (Cox, Daniel, & Boston, 1985). In their evaluation of gifted and talented programs in South Carolina, Callahan, Manke, and Shannon (1988) recommended that school districts reassess their heavy dependence on the pullout model, partly because it was negatively regarded by regular education personnel.

Certainly the shortcomings of the model, when used as the sole accommodation for gifted learners, cannot be denied. Students who are gifted all day every day receive instruction which accommodates their abilities only a few minutes or hours each week. In addition, the units of study in which the students engage frequently have little or no connection with their regular curriculum. All too often, the pullout curriculum is totally separate from and unrelated to the regular curriculum, and the pullout teacher and regular classroom teacher are each unaware of what the other is doing. The pullout setting can produce a fragmented instructional program.

In addition, the model can elicit negative feelings from classroom teachers. Their regular routines may be disrupted when gifted students are pulled out. They may be confronted with the dilemma of what to do with students who are not pulled out. Also, they may find their classes unfavorably compared with a pullout class perceived by students as more fun. Clearly, much of the criticism of the pullout model is justified.

STRENGTHS OF THE PULLOUT

Because of this strong—and, admittedly, often valid—criticism, it is easy to overlook the pullout's strengths and the role this model can play in the development of high-quality programming for the gifted. One of the pullout's most important strengths is that it groups gifted learners with their intellectual peers. While it does not allow as much time in a homogeneous grouping as a self-contained class or a magnet school, nevertheless it does provide at least some opportunity each week for the gifted to interact with and stimulate each other. As Feldhusen (1989) indicates in his synthesis of research on gifted youth, the gifted show both achievement and attitudinal gains when they are grouped together for instruction. Especially at a time when

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ability grouping is under attack in regular education, the pullout model offers instruction in a homogeneous group for at least part of the gifted student's program.

Another important strength of the pullout model is that it forces educators to focus on one group of learners—the gifted—and, thereby, acts as an incentive to obtain training in ways to address the special educational needs of this group. Unfortunately, it often takes the application of a label to a particular kind of learner—such as learning disabled, emotionally handicapped, or gifted—to make people aware that different students have different educational needs and that some special training might be useful for those who work with the labeled students. A teacher of a gifted resource class is more likely to take courses in gifted education and attend conferences on educating the gifted than is a teacher who has just a few gifted children (who may or may not be labeled as such) in a heterogeneous regular classroom. Furthermore, states are more likely to require certification in gifted education or at least some special training for teachers who deal with large groups of gifted students—in pullout classes, for example—than for those who deal with just a few students each year.

When the teachers are carefully selected and well trained, the pullout model can be an effective setting for the development of high-quality curriculum for the gifted.

Not only does the pullout model force educators to confront the issue of teacher training, it also forces them to design curriculum and instructional activities especially for the gifted. In contrast to a regular classroom teacher who must determine ways to deliver a standard curriculum to all different kinds of learners, the pullout teacher can concentrate on developing curriculum just for the gifted. While the regular classroom teacher may be bound by regulations governing what is to be taught, what materials are to be used, and how much time must be spent on each subject each day, the pullout teacher usually has much more flexibility and can create a curriculum—often an interdisciplinary, concept-oriented one—through which gifted students can develop their specific abilities and interests. When the teachers are carefully selected and well trained, the pullout model can be an effective setting for the development of high-quality curriculum for the gifted.

Still another advantage of the pullout model is that, by concentrating provision of services to the gifted, it facilitates program supervision and quality control. A supervisor can easily visit a resource class which provides instruction to the gifted at set, and therefore predictable, times to observe what is happening, and gather information about the kind and quality of differentiated instruction the students are receiving. It is much more difficult for the supervisor to determine what adaptations a teacher may actually be making in a heterogeneous classroom setting since no such modifications may be evident at the specific times the supervisor visits. In addition, a supervisor can often be more effective in working for program improvement with a few trained pullout teachers than with a large number of regular classroom teachers with little or no background in gifted education who have many other concerns competing for their time and attention.

THE PULLOUT AS A STAGE IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Because it groups gifted students, requires the development of special curriculum by trained staff, and lends itself to effective supervision, the pullout frequently serves as the basic program model for a school or school district. All too often, however, once a school or district implements a pullout model, it considers its full obligation to the gifted to be met. Such a view, and the accompanying reliance on the pullout as the sole accommodation for the gifted, can create the problems which produce valid criticism of the model.

On the other hand, when a school or district considers the pullout as merely a starting point for meeting the needs of gifted students, the situation is different. In this case, the pullout can be an important first stage in the development of high-quality programming. By addressing directly the questions and issues the pullout raises, a school or district can move from reliance on a single model to provision of more comprehensive services.

Obviously, when students are pulled from their regular classes, questions arise about what instruction they may be missing when they attend the gifted class. The concern of regular classroom teachers about the time and activities missed can easily become an impetus for discussions about the different pace at which gifted students learn and for staff development on flexible pacing and curriculum compacting as appropriate approaches for moving the gifted more quickly through the required curriculum (Daniel & Cox, 1988) and freeing time during which they can attend the resource class without actually missing anything. By starting with the pullout model alone, a school or district can find itself moving towards more comprehensive provisions simply by addressing initial concerns about the division of time between the regular and resource classrooms.

When a pullout model has been operating successfully, parents and educators are often able to recognize the benefits of grouping and differentiated curriculum for gifted learners. As a result, they may raise questions about the relative amount of time students are spending in the regular and resource classrooms: If students are benefitting

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this much from a resource class that meets four hours a week, wouldn't they benefit much more if they were in the pullout class for eight hours or, even better, all the time? If pursued by the school or school district, such questions can lead to the placement of gifted students in self-contained classes for the full day, to the provision of special advanced classes for students in particular areas of strength, such as math or language, or possibly even to the establishment of a magnet school.

How far a district is willing to go in maintaining the gifted in homogeneous groups will, of course, depend upon its educational philosophy, as well as political considerations. A district may feel that there are good reasons to use several kinds of grouping arrangements for the gifted—so that they have opportunities to interact with their age peers who are not gifted, for example. Nevertheless, whatever the district philosophy, the pullout model can set the stage for extending the amount of time gifted students spend with curriculum and instruction designed specifically for them.

Another question raised by the pullout model deals with the connection between the pullout curriculum and the regular curriculum. "Is my child using in the regular classroom what she learns in the resource class?" parents may ask. "How does the curriculum in the resource classroom contribute to my child's overall educational program?" Questions like these, when perceived as opportunities to strengthen services to gifted students, can be used to initiate discussions between regular classroom teachers and gifted education specialists about ways in which activities in the two classrooms can mutually reinforce and extend each other. The outgrowth of such discussions can be clearly articulated curriculum for gifted students which specifies the role each classroom will play in facilitating the students' intellectual growth. For example, the pullout classroom might be defined as a place where gifted students go for learning experiences which are planned extensions of the regular curriculum rather than simply for randomly selected units of study. While the particular decisions schools or districts make about the relationship between the two sets of curricula may differ, the result in every case should be reduction of the fragmentation to which the pullout setting can contribute and increased coherence and comprehensiveness in the curriculum provided for gifted learners.

Sometimes, when they see units developed for a pullout class, regular classroom teachers may ask why they couldn't do these units or units like them in their classrooms. A school or district can respond to such questions by exploring the possibility of enriching the regular curriculum to benefit gifted learners. At this point, pullout model teachers who have been trained in curriculum differentiation and unit design can be important resources in the revision of the regular curriculum. The expertise developed through the pullout model may be a crucial factor in determining whether such revision involves merely superficial change (such as the addition of puzzles and boundary-breaking activities to the normal class activities) or more substantive change (such as restructuring the content of the regular curriculum to focus on significant interdisciplinary issues, problems, or themes). A pullout model which has set a standard for high-quality, differentiated curriculum can thus facilitate the development of curriculum of comparable quality in the regular classroom.

BEYOND THE PULLOUT

Clearly, the pullout model can be a significant stage in the development of excellent educational opportunities for the gifted and talented. When schools and school districts perceive the pullout as a stage, they can effectively move from there to the development of more comprehensive programming, programming which acknowledges that the gifted are gifted all the time and provides coherent rather than fragmented curriculum and instruction to meet their needs. What eventually emerges may involve either a combination of pullout classes with flexible pacing and curriculum compacting of the regular program, or self-contained classes of gifted students for the whole day or for particular subjects, or a Pyramid model which provides a variety of different options to meet the needs of different gifted learners, or any of a variety of models more comprehensive than the pullout alone.

Too often in education we see a model like the pullout as the solution to a problem, put it in place, and then become complacent, telling ourselves that because we have a model in place we are meeting students' needs. Then when the model is questioned or problems with it arise, we tend to discard the model altogether and start anew with a totally different approach, thus sacrificing the expertise and benefits which we developed through the now out-of-favor model. We do not need to repeat this pattern in gifted education. Instead, we can treat the pullout model as a significant stage in program development, one which is a training ground for specialists in gifted education, one which can set a standard of quality for differentiated curriculum and instruction, and one which can provide a firm foundation on which to build more comprehensive programming.

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Full-Time Gifted Programming: *A Working Model*

Mary F. Toll

Programming for the gifted is usually allotted a minimal amount of instructional time during the school day. The range of part-time options includes 2 to 3 hours per day on a daily basis, one day per week, one hour per week, or even fewer contact hours.

As one reflects upon this limited instructional time, one has to ask the question: "What is happening to these very bright children during the rest of the school day?" Additional questions include: "Does the gifted child's intellectual brightness end the moment he or she steps out of the gifted class?" "Are these special talents present 24 hours a day or only one day a week?" "Is part-time programming an appropriate way to meet the needs of these special children?"

Gifted children require appropriate programming every hour of the instructional day. Their needs can be met most effectively in full day placement. This option is also considerably less expensive than pull-out programs since it simply requires reassigning students to the same number of teachers.

Full-time programming can develop areas of strengths of the gifted child. If housed in regular schools, it also provides a built-in option for part-time programming if a child's needs warrant this option—for example, when a gifted child is below average in math or reading. During the scheduled full-time gifted class session of math or reading, the gifted child with a known weakness in that area may have the option of attending a regular math or reading class.

School districts can establish a full-time gifted program model by utilizing the following steps:

- Develop a district committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents, to research and develop recommendations for the design of the program.
- Outline a district phase-in plan. Attention should be given to the level at which the program would first start. Should an elementary model first be implemented, or a secondary model? It should be noted that full-time programming can occur at centers for the gifted or at individual schools, depending upon the number of children. Would a full-time program be established as a stand-alone center for the gifted or infused as a school within a school? How many centers or programs would be necessary? How many miles apart should the centers or schools be placed?
- Develop an implementation plan for the full-time program. Consider selection criteria for establishing the centers. Think about the location of the center, costs, impact on school facilities (if housed as a school within a school), the number of students, parent notification, and transportation of students.
- Develop a training or inservice support model for the teachers who will be assigned to the gifted program.
- Emphasis should be placed on curriculum compacting, higher level thinking skills, extension of the curriculum, and guidance and counseling needs of the gifted.
- Develop an evaluation plan for the program. Address parent, student, and teacher attitudes about the program. Analyze teaching strategies related to high level thought processes. Assess student achievement and growth of higher order reasoning.
- Submit recommendations and plan to the school board.

Objections do occur to full-time programming, so be prepared for them. Most of the objections center around misconceptions about gifted children. The greatest misconception is that full-time programming is elitist. This is hard to understand as well as to accept. How can appropriate educational programming be elitist? Should we just bore bright children into underachievement? Or, should we be responsible enough to provide stimulating, challenging, and resourceful educational experiences?

I have never heard of school football teams, soccer teams or cheerleaders referred to as "elitist." However, as soon as bright children are grouped together to progress and learn at a rate commensurate with their abilities, the elitist issue seems to surface. There is *no* evidence that gifted programs product elitist values. On the contrary, 60 years of research suggests that placement with other gifted children *humbles* these students (Silverman, 1990). It is time that we as a nation began to offer our bright children the opportunity to engage in learning experiences which meet their needs. We will benefit from their discoveries and their endeavors.

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Mary F. Toll, is the program specialist for gifted in the School District of Palm Beach County, FL, and adoctoral candidate at Nova University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Parent-Educator Relationships

Sandra Carlton

It's that continuous chain of parent-educator relationships which becomes the backbone supporting a child's educational experience. It can become the stabilizing agent which holds a child's education together and gives it continuity across years, schools, and curricula. Therefore, it is paramount to ensure that this renewable relationship gets off to a good start at the beginning of each new academic cycle.

Building any relationship takes time and it's that critical time period at the beginning which demands such intense emotional investment. Beginnings are fragile, yet malleable. Mutual respect, consistency, predictable movement, good faith efforts, and patience build stability and trust into a good relationship—but it takes time to bring all these elements together into a viable form. It is this absolute need for consistency—this need for a united, working alliance—which gives purpose to the parent-educator relationship. Parent and educator efforts should augment rather than conflict, thereby avoiding confusion or forcing the child to take sides on issues. The relationship feeds itself strength as parents and educators share common goals and use compatible methods of working toward mutually agreed upon objectives.

I want to think of Philip's educators akin to being extended family. My gut tells me to admiringly hug Philip's teachers, offer undying alliance, and then truthfully brief them on what they're up against in educating him. The truth has many facets which can be exposed all at once or in parts, over time. Delivering the abrupt truth in one sitting could threaten the self-confidence of a good educator or shake the tenuous equilibrium of the new relationship. The whole truth says I doubt the teacher's abilities to personally satisfy all aspects of Philip's educational needs—because of Philip, not because of the teacher's expertise as an educator. Thus, in the beginning, it seems more prudent, and perhaps more humane, to deliver the truth in edible portions.

The truth is that Philip creates contradiction. With profoundly gifted children, life is condensed. Rates of processing information, learning, and execution of various actions seems highly compact, almost spontaneous. Interests flare and ebb in strobe-light fashion. Rates of maturity and intellectual development consistently overrun chronological age. Standard measures don't hold. Time takes on a different meaning when dealing with profoundly gifted children. New cycles and processes are traversed at light speed without the need for repetition; children closer to the norm move through and revisit the same paths long after the profoundly gifted child has moved on to something else.

Parents of profoundly gifted children are faced with biannual, even triennial adjustments in planning to accommodate the rapid learning pace of the child. Long term planning gets chucked because there is no way of predicting when and how much of a subject the child will consume in the course of a given academic year. Time-condensed planning and compacted curricula become necessities with the profoundly gifted.

If I wait until the fall conference each year to discuss Philip's unique needs, my advocacy efforts may come too late. By then, Philip may have developed a pattern of vegetating in a typical class setting without an individualized component which recognizes his special needs. After several weeks of stale regurgitation of what he already knows, he will most likely feel bored or frustrated with having his drive to learn bridled or he may resort to more visible means of getting his needs met. Knowing that he is not going to miss much, he may opt to retreat into an apathetic stupor or use acting out behaviors in the classroom in order to liven the place up. Again, first impressions create lasting impressions which can irreversibly damage the relationships involving a student, his educators, and parents.

If Philip is viewed as a problem rather than as a child with highly exceptional abilities and needs, behavioral compliance becomes the priority. Most likely, with appropriate challenge, the inappropriate behavior would eradicate itself because the problem, as the child sees it, is no longer there. If compliance becomes the toll gate or prerequisite to Philip's freedom to learn at his own pace—held as a carrot for good behavior rather than as a given based on his abilities—he may opt not to make the trade.

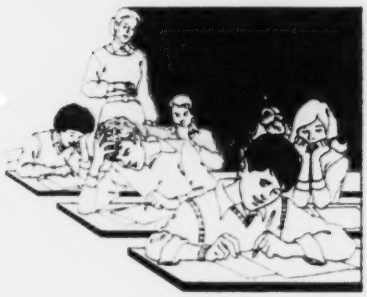
Once his behaviors become a problem, the parent-educator relationship then becomes the reactionary vehicle for problem intervention rather than being a proactive mechanism for problem prevention. The focus becomes fixed on the reduction of unacceptable behaviors rather than accommodation and planning for Philip's specialized educational needs.

Philip could become an academic casualty without the support of his teachers. Establishing cooperative relationships with his teachers is an anxiety-producing balancing act using a circus of real players and no safety net. All players involved need this relationship in place in order to get on with the business at hand: providing and receiving a productive, meaningful education which recognizes each child's unique abilities and interests while best utilizing available resources.

Sandra Carlton has a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology and Vocation Rehabilitation Counseling and is the parent of a highly gifted child.

Kathi Kearney

THE HIGHLY GIFTED



The twentieth century has seen numerous attempts at educational reform, including the development of new educational methods. The junior high school concept and the project method dating from the century's first two decades are early examples; the open classroom of the 1970s, mastery learning of the 1980s, the middle school concept, and the currently popular whole language and cooperative learning approaches represent modern attempts. Used with trained teachers, in the right setting, and with an appropriate student population, each of these methods can be beneficial. But when such methods are utilized improperly as a means of social control, ignore research findings regarding their use, or slight the individual needs of children, problems arise.

Highly gifted children are particularly vulnerable in such situations for several reasons. First, they do not have the same legal right to a "free and appropriate public education" as handicapped children do, even though their exceptionality may be just as great. Second, the dual specters of "elitism" and the slashed budget haunt the hallways of so many schools today that services for gifted students may be diluted or cut entirely. Finally, although most highly gifted children spend a good portion of their time in the regular classroom, new methods and approaches used in general education usually are not researched to specifically determine their effectiveness with this population.

The cooperative learning approach is an excellent example. Children of varying abilities are placed together in small working groups to practice specific tasks or to complete a joint project. Two essential features of such groups include:

> *...group goals, or positive interdependence: the cooperative groups must work together to earn recognition, grades, rewards, and other indicators of group success...The second essential feature is individual accountability: the group's success must depend on the individual learning of all group members (Slavin, 1989/1990a, p. 52).*

This extremely popular instructional method "has a vastly better research base than most innovations" (Slavin, 1989/1990b, p. 3). However, Slavin, an outspoken proponent of the method, admits of two dangers "inherent in the success of cooperative learning...that large numbers of teachers with half-knowledge may use ineffective forms of the approach" and "that the methods will be oversold and undertrained" (p. 3). For highly gifted children, a third danger might be added—that because of the emphasis of this particular method on heterogeneous grouping, those who implement cooperative learning in the classroom will overlook the unique educational and social/emotional needs these children face. Not only do highly gifted children need access to intellectual peers, they also need the opportunity to test out of material that they already know well, and to engage in challenging and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that match their abilities.

Corinne, a highly gifted 12-year-old eighth grader, described her experience with cooperative learning in a letter to her superintendent. Her letter was written only after she had attempted, tactfully but without success, to communicate her feelings to her teachers.

> *The...method that is unsatisfactory is the cooperative learning program in my social studies class...I understand that this is a controversial issue and I believe that the students' point of view is the most important. We are the ones who are being taught so we should know what works for us and what doesn't. In cooperative learning groups the person with the strongest personality and highest academic ability usually takes control of the group immediately. Teachers tend to put the faster learners with the slower ones to help them along. That is the exact purpose and problem with cooperative learning. The faster kids are suddenly responsible for everyone else... Sure, on paper cooperative learning looks wonderful because not as many people fail. I believe that the advanced students are being slowed down drastically by this learning method. Not all kids want to learn, and I feel that cooperative learning puts the responsibility of making those people learn on advanced students.*
>
> *I understand that school systems try not to put students in homogeneous groups for social reasons, but there are many other places and times for gifted and talented students to*

(continued on page 15)

socialize with these people. Our important education should not be compromised for social reasons...

Gifted and talented children are often stuck in science and social studies classes that are geared toward average learners. We are shoved aside and ignored. Would this happen to a slow learner or a handicapped child? I don't believe so... I feel that if effort was put into it, a good program for us could be provided. We suffer equally in an average classroom and need alternative programs as well. Just because there aren't many of us doesn't mean we don't have a right to learn.

What can concerned parents, teachers, and administrators do to help a child like Corinne?

- Acknowledge her feelings. No one educational method is right for every child; a 12 year old who can articulate her thoughts as well as Corinne deserves to be heard.
- Review the child's educational program and intervene if necessary.
- Recognize the limitations as well as the strengths of popular educational methods. Cooperative learning, with its emphasis on heterogeneous grouping (Augustine, Gruber, & Hanson, 1989/90), diminishes the chances that a highly gifted child will have regular opportunities to work with intellectual peers. This can be a particularly problematic situation for highly gifted girls, whose tendency to hide their abilities and to "disappear" (Silverman, 1986, p. 43) may only receive more encouragement in such an environment.
- Adapt popular educational methods to reflect the characteristics and needs of the highly gifted child. While cooperative learning groups in a *heterogeneous* classroom with extreme variations in ability may produce the kind of frustration Corinne describes, the principles of cooperative learning have been used very successfully with *homogeneously* grouped gifted students for many years. Cooperative group projects specifically designed for gifted students, such as the study of "The Evolution of Common Things" developed by Leta Hollingworth in the 1920s and 1930s (Hollingworth, 1926) and the contemporary Odyssey of the Mind creative thinking competition are only two examples.
- Finally, recognize that highly gifted students exist and that they do indeed have a right to learn in a manner commensurate with their ability. If adjustments need to be made in curriculum or teaching methods in order for this to happen, find the courage to make the necessary changes.

Postscript

Corinne, by the way, got another lesson in cooperative learning. When nothing changed in the classroom as a result of her letter, she organized the other gifted students in her middle school and together they wrote and signed a petition describing their concerns, which they presented to school officials. She also drafted a letter to the editor of the local newspaper.

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Kathi Kearney is Founder of the Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children in Auburn, Maine, and is a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University.

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Suzanne M. Perry

RIGHT BEGINNINGS

Another bright beginning for Bright Beginnings ...

As the mama of our four children—three of whom are age six and under—as well as being an individual who works professionally with primary aged young thinkers on a daily basis, I was delighted to be asked to take on the Bright Beginnings column. Over the next few months, let's explore how we, as parents, can nurture the bodies, minds and spirits of our young gifted children.

Nurturing Bodies

The physical aspects of parenting a gifted child are rarely mentioned in gifted publications or literature. This is not because there aren't any differences in the physical needs of gifted as opposed to other children. Rather, I suspect, it's just that the mental and affective needs of gifted children are so demanding that it has been assumed that physical needs are of lesser importance. Since we, as parents, are responsible for whole children, not just their mental or affective parts, it is essential for us to know more about the physical nurturing of our youngsters, as well, including their food, clothing, health care and rest needs.

Food: Eating It Up!

Most families eat three meals a day every day. That's a whole bunch of time out of your child's life. Here's a little food for thought: could what your child is eating be affecting her performance at home or at school? Numerous studies have indicated that there may be some relationship between eating refined sugars and food additives and a child's behavior. At the Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, Linda Silverman has observed a high incidence of food allergies among the gifted. Food that your child is allergic to or that causes hyperkinetic behavior might actually be masking your child's giftedness in school or making him exhausting to live with at home. In fact, a new study out of Yale University School of Medicine, by Dr. Timothy W. Jones (reported in Carper, 1990) indicated that children actually have a different biological reaction to sugars than adults which does cause little ones to be crabby and anxious. If you suspect this might be a problem, reading up on it with your family might be well worth your time. For any child, food as close to its natural state as possible tends to be best—that is, a raw apple is better than applesauce, which is better than apple pie. Avoiding an overload of refined sugar, saturated fats and sodium while stressing fresh foods and fibre just makes sense for anybody.

To relieve the anxiety of parents who both work, there is evidence to suggest that the diets of children with working mothers are just as nutritious as those of kids from traditional families. A study reported in *Newsweek* (MacNeil, 1986) found that the children of two-paycheck families actually tended to eat less pre-sweetened cereal, candy and salty snacks.

Since so much of our time every day is related to food, why not make the most of it with your able little learner? First you have to get the food from somewhere. You can either grow it yourself, which opens up all kinds of delightful parent/child learning experiences, or you can go to the store to buy it. Grocery shopping offers many learning possibilities, too. Planning what to buy before you ever leave for the store offers your child an opportunity for input. If you plan to cook something together, or if an older child will be cooking something on his or her own, use of references—the cookbook or recipe card—is required.

(More about food and our bright beginners in the next issue).

I'm so pleased to inform you that your child qualifies for our Gifted and Talented Program.
Great! When does she start?
Let me see... How old will she be in the year 2000?
Expletive Deleted

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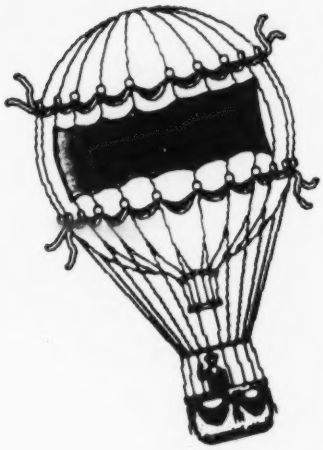
Suzanne Perry, Ph.D., is Instructional Resource for Project Think in the Aurora Public Schools in Colorado, and author of the children's book, *Giftedness: Living with it and Liking it.*

IN SEARCH OF SERENDIPITY



Creative Ventures And Encounters

Jerry Flack
Tour Guide

On this journey, let's travel to the Creativity Bookshop to examine some excellent books about our favorite subject: creativity. There are thousands of books on the subject of creativity and related topics such as innovation and problem solving. Some of these volumes examine the nature of creativity as a construct while other emphasize self-improvement through the dynamics of creative behaviors. Still other books provide teaching and parenting strategies to utilize with youth. Since there are so many excellent books from which to choose in the Creativity Bookshop, the purpose of this journey will be to highlight some particularly special volumes. Addresses are provided in two cases where books would be difficult to find in standard bookstores.

Conceptual Blockbusting: A Guide to Better Ideas (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1979) is a classic in the field of creative problem solving. The author, James L. Adams, is an engineer and professor at Stanford University. Adams outlines the many blocks to creativity and provides creative strategies for overcoming them in *Conceptual Blockbusting*. The book is a delight to read and may be enjoyed and profitably used at home, in the office, and at school with students. Adams's follow-up book is *The Care and Feeding of Ideas: A Guide to Encouraging Creativity* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1986).

Anne B. Crabbe, the director of the Future Problem Solving (FPS) Program, explores 15 salient characteristics of creative people in her book *Creating More Creative People* (Laurinburg, NC: Future Problem Solving Program, 1986). The characteristics Dr. Crabbe describes include traits such as flexibility, intuition, and openness to ideas. Each is described and followed with at least 5 highly creative teaching strategies designed to strengthen it. More recently, Dr. Crabbe has produced *Creating More Creative People, Book II* (1988). Both books may be ordered from the FPS Program, St. Andrews College, Laurinburg, NC 28352.

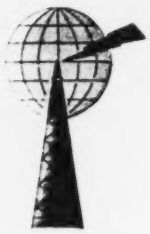
Gary Davis examines creative characteristics, processes, metaphorical thinking, tests of creativity, and many other vital topics in the second edition of *Creativity is Forever* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1986). Davis's book is easy to read and highly informative. The chapters on the creative person and techniques for developing creativity are especially excellent.

One of the classic texts used in graduate school courses in gifted child education is *Creative Thinking and Problem Solving in Gifted Education* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1985). Authors John F. Feldhusen and Donald J. Treffinger discuss creativity and creative problem solving in the context of gifted education programs. The critical role creativity should play in designing curricula for gifted students is outlined. A particular bonus in this publication is the review of instructional materials which are available to educators.

Samuel Micklus, the creator of the Oddyssey of the Mind Program, has published numerous practice problems in *Odyssey of the Mind* (Glassboro, NJ: Creative Competitions, 1984). The problems, once used in competition, can now serve as excellent creativity training materials for gifted students, both in the home and at school. Additional books and teaching materials are available from Creative Competitions, Inc., P.O. Box 27, Glassboro, NJ 08028.

The work of E. Paul Torrance in the field of creativity and gifted education is legendary. One of Dr. Torrance's most recent publications is *The Incubation Model of Teaching:*

(Continued on page 18)



ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

This columnist has been accused of being too positive! Is that possible?? Can we ever be *too* optimistic?

Perhaps we who are involved with gifted and talented students would be justified if we wallowed in negativism. Gifted education is always the first to go when budgets are cut or schools are restructured. We continue to battle charges of elitism and parental pressure. We fight the ever-present myth that gifted children will make it on their own. Although these are depressingly chronic problems, is anyone served by perpetual pessimism?

Fortunately, there is a ray of hope on the horizon. Actually it is a full-blown sunrise. For the first time since 1982, there is an Office of Gifted and Talented Education, under the direction of Patricia O'Connell Ross, within the United States Department of Education.

The Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 1988 charges the U.S. Department of Education to encourage efforts for gifted and talented students through:

1. A competitive grants program for model demonstration projects, focusing on economically disadvantaged, limited English speaking or handicapped students.
2. A national research center directed by Joseph Renzulli of the University of Connecticut, in collaboration with the University of Georgia, the University of Virginia and Yale University.
3. Implementation of the Congressional mandate for the Department of Education to serve as a focal point of national leadership for gifted and talented education.

Efforts are already under way to implement the charges of the Javits Act. In the first year, the Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI) funded 28 grants with an average of $250,000. The national research center is in touch with collaborative school districts and state educational agencies across the country.

By the time you read this, the state directors of gifted and talented programs will have attended a conference sponsored by OERI to assist in the preparation of a national report on the condition of gifted and talented education in the nation; and to focus on the viewpoints of state education agencies in critical issues facing practitioners and policy makers in the area of gifted and talented education. The state leaders will be concerned with the effects of reform and restructuring efforts on the education of high ability students.

Is all this cause for optimism? I want to believe that a positive and dynamic support structure now exists for gifted and talented children. I want to believe that the ground swell of activity on the federal level will eventually touch every high ability student in every community in this nation. I want to believe that education in the United States values intellectual ability, achievement and excellence over mediocrity.

The self-fulfilling prophecy works. If I believe that education can positively impact gifted and talented children, then it will happen. Please accuse me of being too positive.

Dorothy Knopper is State Consultant on the Gifted, Colorado Department of Education and "Open Space" columnist for *Roeper Review*.

Creative Ventures *(continued)*

Getting Beyond the Aha! (Buffalo, NY: Bearly Limited Inc., 1990) which he has co-authored with Tammy Safter. Torrance and Safter provide an excellent introduction to the incubation model of teaching and demonstrate how this model fits in with the current thinking skills movement in the USA. Outstanding teaching strategies are provided for all content areas of the school curriculum and for all grade levels. There is something special in this book for every teacher.

One of the most visible and highly successful promoters of creativity in the business sector is Roger von Oech who has served as a creative consultant to many of the largest and most competitive corporations. The author distills his key ideas and strategies in two fun-to-read books with delightful titles: *A Whack on the Side of the Head* (New York: Warner Books, 1983), and *A Kick in the Seat of the Pants* (Harper & Row Publishers, 1986). The ideas and examples von Oech shares are primarily aimed at the business community, but they speak to such universal attitudes and behaviors that they have relevance to everyone. Teachers and parents can greatly profit from reading both volumes.

The time on the parking meter is about to expire, and I would rather spend my meager financial resources on books than on parking tickets, so we must end this particular trip to the Creativity Bookshop. Until next time, wishes for happy and creative reading to all.

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and editor of *GIT News*.

Lisa Ferguson

from parent to parent

When parents are asked how schools might better serve gifted and talented students, they often point to changes in program administration as key elements.

Irene Torres, a speech and language pathologist in Brooklyn, New York, feels an understanding of the many different kinds and combinations of gifts must be incorporated into the way gifted programs are structured. As the mother of two highly gifted boys, Irene has dealt with public and private schools on a personal level as well as in her professional work.

Her critique involves 2 issues: that the programs must adjust to children who do not fit the pattern we have come to expect; and that gifted education should concern itself with teaching the basics and not just enriching the education of the gifted child.

Giving the child more information, more creative opportunities, does not guarantee that they will pick up basic skills. Gifted education has no protocol for basic skills teaching, only enrichment.

In order to teach basic skills, educators of the gifted and talented must address the variety, the incredible diversity of the gifted and talented population. We have to learn to meet the needs of the children.

Irene's experience with Special Education provides an interesting contrast.

When you start looking at how to help kids who perform below grade level, the group is broken up into smaller categories. Special Education has 13 or 14 classifications. Those who perform above grade level are all lumped into one group. In most Gifted Education there's only one kind of classification—'gifted'.

Administrators of programs for the gifted need to look at IQ levels, learning disabilities, combinations of disabilities, learning styles, multiple gifts, etc.

There seems to be a certain mindset that if a gifted child doesn't behave in a certain way then he or she doesn't belong in the program. Administrators tend to be unresponsive if the kids don't fit the pattern—whether it's gifted, special ed. or normal kids.

So what if the child doesn't fit the protocol? Change the protocol! The hallmark is how the child thinks, not how the child behaves.

Parent to Parent is your forum for sharing ideas with other parents of gifted children. We want to hear your story—what has worked, or not worked, for your family. Please send your name, address, and phone number to Understanding Our Gifted, P.O. Box 3489, Littleton, CO 80161, and we will contact you for details.

Lisa Ferguson is from Haverill, Massachusetts and the parent of highly gifted children.

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ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT

Advanced Development, the first journal on adult giftedness, will be publishing its third annual volume in January, 1991. The theme of the issue is "The Possible Human," featuring the work of Jean Houston. Subscription rate is currently $15 for individuals or institutions. Contact Snowpeak Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 3489, Littleton, CO 80161 for further information.

Intertel Foundation, Inc.—1991 Hollingworth Award Competition

This $2000 award is presented annually for proposed research in the field of the education or psychology of gifted children and youth, and is open to individuals as well as educational organizations. Deadline for submission of proposals is January 15, 1991. Application information may be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Dr. Roxanne H. Cramer, Chairman, Hollingworth Award Committee, 4300 Sideburn Rd., Fairfax, VA 22030.

The **National Research Center on Gifted and Talented** is seeking nontraditional or unpublished identification instruments for special populations. Evaluation procedures are also being sought.. Please send information to: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, Curry School of Education, 405 Emmet Street, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903.

Central Illinois Gifted and Talented Conference

March 5-6, 1991. Central Illinois Gifted and Talented Conference will be held at the Gateway Convention Center, Collinsville, IL. Over 40 teacher-to-teacher exchange sessions. For more information, contact Judy Ackermann, ESC #16, 500 Wilshire Dr., Belleville, IL 62223 (618) 398-5280.

Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. will sponsor the Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Holland, from July 29-August 2, 1991. Workshops will deal with all aspects of Gifted Education and represent some 40 countries from around the world. English will be the official conference language.For more information and registration material, contact the North American Conference Representative: Richard E. Lange, 834 Inverrary Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015. (708) 537-6029.

Answers to Instructional Strategies column: A (1); B (2); C (4); D (5); E (6); F (3).

FOCUS:

CREATIVITY

THE DIVERGENTLY THINKING CHILD
Dr. Deirdre V Lovecky

CREATIVITY IN GIFTED EDUCATION: Encouraging Innovation
Dr. Jerry D. Flack

What we must reach for is a conception of perpetual self-discovery, perpetual reshaping to realize one's best self, to be the person one could be.

—John W. Gardner

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Volume 3, Issue 3

The Divergently Thinking Child

Deirdre V. Lovecky, Ph.D.

When Celia was little, she loved the song: "Puff (The Magic Dragon)."[1] When she'd hear the line about Jackie Paper bringing Puff "strings, and sealing wax, and other fancy stuff," she would feel safe and happy. Celia's imagination saw Jackie and Puff using the wax to make the ceiling of Puff's cave so nice and shiny that it glowed in the dark, and Puff never had to feel afraid, even when Jackie Paper came no more. Despite the sad end to the song, and the real sadness of Celia's own life, she never forgot the warm feelings created by the combination of this wonderful song and her imagination.

Young creative children, like Celia, exercise imagination in dealing with all of life's events. This continual creation is a sort of improvisation, using whatever materials, words, mental images, ideas and sounds appear on the mental horizon. It is a continual moving from what is known to what is unknown, from a self-imposed structure to a new version of what structure should be. Making new connections and seeing new relationships in previously learned material, as *(Continued on page 7)*

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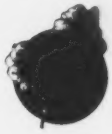
Creativity in Gifted Education: Encouraging Innovation

Jerry D. Flack, Ph.D.

Most states and most local school districts officially subscribe to the federal definition authored by Congress in 1981 which states that gifted and talented children are those "...children who give evidence of high performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership capacity, or specific academic fields..." (Clark, 1988, p. 6). However, we may also observe that few programs nationwide emphasize *creativity* as the focal point of gifted programming or identification. Too little emphasis is placed on the development of creativity and innovation in all gifted students, and even less significance is placed on identifying creatively gifted students. The latter is problematic if we listen to the counsel of E. Paul Torrance who has said that a too heavy reliance on the more traditional means of identification, I.Q. and achievement measures, will cause us to leave significant numbers of creatively gifted students out of programs for the gifted. The situation *(Continued on page 11)*



FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! We joyously begin the last decade of the 20th century with an exploration into the creative person and the creative process. Dr. Deirdre Lovecky describes the unique personality qualities of the "divergent" thinker—the creatively gifted child. Dr. Jerry Flack, our regularly creative columnist, shares exciting ideas in his lead article about nurturing the creative process. Our theme is echoed in several of the regular columns as well.

We all need to sharpen our creative problem solving abilities to respond to the tightening budgets and changes in philosophy that currently endanger gifted education. The accusation of "elitism" has never been louder. But gifted education is no more elitist than provisions for the mentally handicapped; it is a legitimate response to differences in learning rate. How come we don't hear the football team being called "elitist"? Why is athletic prowess encouraged but mathematical precocity considered societally unacceptable?

Elitism is a socio-economic disease, not an intellectual one. In fact, the gifted are keenly sensitive to injustice and have always been the backbone of social reform and egalitarianism. When gifted children find others like themselves, they are humbled rather than elevated. The irony is that children from economically disadvantaged families, from single parent families, and from families with two working parents, are the ones who will suffer the most if we lose special provisions for the gifted. The advantaged have other options, such as private schools and homeschooling. The majority must depend upon their local public schools for the recognition and nurturing of talent.

Perhaps we will respond to this new challenge with a creative redefinition of giftedness, not based on achievement—which is related to opportunity in society—but based upon learning and personality characteristics of students. Hopefully, the hidden gifted learner, the underachiever, the emotionally gifted child, will begin to be recognized in our shifting perceptions of giftedness.

So we begin this year more hopeful than we ended last year. May your own creativity blossom in the coming year, and may you find creative ways to help preserve gifted education.

Linda Silverman

Understanding Our Gifted

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James R. Delisle

ALEIDOSCOPE

Creativity: What Price Courage?

Of all the qualities possessed by creative children—originality, inquisitiveness, flexibility—the one that is most essential for the full development of their talents is **courage**. Our world's wisest scholar of creativity research, Dr. E. Paul Torrance (1962), wrote that society in general is "savage" towards creative young thinkers, always trying to compartmentalize their energy or channel their ideas into neat, pre-existing forms. Proof of this surrounds us, and is noticed in everyday comments that our culture classifies as "just kidding around." Witness:

- "Don't ask Tanya any questions. When you ask her to tell you the time she tells you how to build a watch!"
- "Tommy, there's no such thing as purple cows. Here, take another piece of paper and draw me a *real* cow."
- "I don't care how many hours it took to build your Lego City, clean it up before our guests arrive!"

Creativity is often messy; frequently, it takes time to both bloom and appreciate. But parents can help safeguard their children's creativity from the onslaught of a convergent society's demands by allowing their youngsters the freedom to think—and act—independently...which, by the way, is not easy to do, as our adult actions are often deemed successful by the amount of closure, not ambiguity, that we bring to our lives. So many of us suffer from that most dreaded ailment—lysophobia: the fear of open-endedness—that we prefer our children to follow in our controlled, steady footsteps. Yet, if we give in to this, we give in to folly; for if childhood is not a time to dream, to explore, to wonder, then when else is there?

Rather than providing a "recipe book" of suggestions for how to promote creativity in children (resources like this abound in bookstores), I prefer to recommend ways that adults can act to enable creativity to emerge in their children—and if they're not careful, in themselves as well.

Respect the Unexpected: Adults are often told to expect the unexpected in their children, yet it is a far different thing to respect it when it arrives. By allowing their children the chance to experiment and play with ideas, words and manipulatives without asking for premature closure (or neatness) the message is sent that it's OK to be "in the process of."

Defend Your Child's Right To Be Creative: Caustic comments like "She must be a real handful," or "I bet his teachers have to really sit on him" expressed by relatives or friends should be met with pride, not embarrassment. A reaction like "It's such a pleasure—and a challenge—to have a child who keeps us on our toes" may be met with some jarbled stares, but it shows your appreciation of your child's uniqueness.

Practice What You Preach: We can talk until we are the proverbial "blue in the face," but unless we *model* creativity, innovation and risk-taking ourselves, our children will see our encouraging words as an adult facade that is merely accommodating, not as a genuine belief that is shared.

Well, there it is: I promised no recipes but delivered, instead, a prescription (sorry). Pretty courageous , huh? To say I won't do something and then go ahead and try to sneak it by you? Sometimes, what we plan and what actually happens turn out to be very different. Just another of life's curve balls, I guess.

I read once—somewhere, long ago—that in life it is stillness we have to justify, not movement. Perhaps if we remember this, above all else, we will both appreciate our children, and teach them the value of their own creativity.

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James Delisle, Ph.D. is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at Kent State University, and is President of CEC/TAG. His latest book, *Biographies of Everyday Kids*, is available through Free Spirit Publishing.

PARENTING

Alchemists In Residence

More recently, gifted programming includes identifying and serving the "creative." How do we find creative kids? Well, creative kids act funny.... They take down drain spouts to build submarines; they invent words (and languages!) and they have an annoying snicker—like they know something we don't know! And what is hailed as creative in Wauwatosa may be shamefully lewd in Bangor.

Dr. Emanuel Hammer at the Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University scrutinized creative adolescents to detect compelling components in creative people:

- Creative individuals experience deep, rich, intense feeling responses to emotional subtleties.
- Their emotional experiences are often created on canvas or keyboards in intense, solitary interaction with their creative process.
- Creative people are often driven by feeling confident, optimistic, and determined.
- They seem to have a sense of destiny, recognition, and uniqueness. They need to imprint their personalities on others.
- Creative people seek influence over their audience's feeling responses.
- Creative artists may embody a particularly sensitive intellect that extends into areas generally thought of as feminine. This is coupled with a high degree of masculine strength, ambition, confidence, and power.
- They have independent personalities which are less numbed by the mediocre and debilitated by common standards.
- They may be seen as rebellious as they escape sameness with others.
- They send postcards from the edge of a broader range of feeling—agony, ecstacy, isolation and intimacy. They have more intensities that appear to be "over-reactions" to us ordinary folk.
- They struggle more within themselves than with others. Their paint or piano compensates for their internal disequilibrium.

Can creative kids survive captivity? Can their parents? Some points for promoting creativity in your children and composure in yourself are:

- Accept that neatness may conflict with creative progress.
- Share their joy in achievement!
- Show enthusiasm for trying to do things in new and different ways. "Let's do it **wrong**!"
- Ask your children what the activity means to them.
- Provide opportunities to exhibit accomplishments.
- Accept disappointments rather than attempt to placate with platitudes. Ask what they might try next time.
- Allow your children to perform brilliantly. Do not limit their progress by age or grade expectations.
- Arrange cooperation with others who have complementing strengths and abilities.
- Share interest and information about other creatively successful people through biographies, informative trips, personal contacts.
- Help them accept that others may feel threatened by their ideas.
- Help them to accept that others will not always understand or appreciate what they care about.
- Model being gentle and supportive in expressing a different point of view.
- Program for success. Help set short, attainable goals.
- Participate in mentally "walking through" unfamiliar circumstances and practice anticipating consequences and making decisions. Share and accept fantasy.
- Clearly differentiate between what they accomplish and who they are!
- Be aware of your positive to negative response ratio and strive to give life to their ideas.
- Listen with your whole body, mind, and spirit as if nothing else at that moment matters as much as their thoughts and feelings.
- Actually depend on their creative products and ideas. You may get more creative in making them work!
- Arrange a place where creative pursuits can continue without interruption or evaluation.
- Keep pace with their changing interests.

We can participate with our little alchemists and help them turn obstacles into opportunities. Alchemy starts with an optimistic attitude.

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Elizabeth Meckstroth is a therapist and consultant in Evanston, Illinois and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child*.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Karen C. Nelson

A Knowledge Base for the Gifted

In the previous column, I gave a brief overview of Bloom's Taxonomy of Thinking Skills (1956). In this column, I will discuss implications for the gifted of the foundation skills: knowledge, comprehension and application.

Many educators believe that gifted students need more emphasis on the higher level skills of Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Consequently, school programs for the gifted tend to emphasize these process skills and de-emphasize content. However, with the current decline of educational standards and outcomes, we need to question whether the gifted are being taught the necessary foundation knowledge in regular classrooms.

One of the frequently observed characteristics of gifted learners is the speed and apparent effortlessness of their acquisition of knowledge. Yet, test results from the SAT over the past two decades show that the verbal skills of our most academically talented young people are diminishing. There were 73% fewer students scoring above 650 in 1984 than there had been in 1972 (Hirsch, 1988).

E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (1988), author of the bestseller, *Cultural Literacy*, suggests that the loss of achievement on SAT scores occurs because our schools are failing to pass on the tradition of cultural literacy. Cultural literacy refers to more than learning the skill of reading; it is knowledge of the network of facts and concepts that a person should know to read a newspaper with adequate comprehension to get the point, understand the implications and relate what is read to the unstated context of associations.

In other words, cultural literacy is an answer to the question: "What should an educated person know?" This question implies that "getting" an education is not just a matter of attending public school for 12 years, and, by virtue of the attendance, collecting a high school diploma. To be culturally literate is to be in possession of a body of knowledge considered basic to educated people in adult American society.

Hirsch (1988), with the help of two colleagues at the University of Virginia, provides us in his book with a list of 5000 items that make up the content of cultural literacy for an American. Seven dates (that's all) begin the list. All other items are alphabetized. Here are the first seven on the H list: H_2O, habeus corpus, habitat, H-bomb, Hades, Had we but world enough time..., the Hague.

You need not be able to identify each word or phrase precisely. The important thing is to have a general sense of what is being referred to when an item appears in your reading. You would be further applying cultural literacy when you use items appropriately in written or spoken communications.

Hirsch's list of 5000 items may not be all that a gifted student should know by the time of high school graduation, but it gives us a well defined idea of what the minimum knowledge base should be. If the curriculum in your schools is not producing cultural literacy, then Hirsch's list tells what items to include in the special education and home education of your gifted student(s).

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Karen C. Nelson, Ph.D., is Coordinator of the graduate program in gifted education at Emporia State University in Kansas. She has been a public school teacher, curriculum editor, writer and poet.

THE READING ROOM

Welcome back to the Reading Room. As promised, this visit we will give brief commentaries on several chapter books, those short (64-80 pp.) books designed for a second and third grade readership, but appropriate to precocious readers of preschool and kindergarten age.

Random House "Stepping Stone Books" are slim paperbacks costing $1.95 — so many children can own them for rereading. There are contemporary, historical, and sports stories, fantasies (imagine a giant, vampire squirrel!) and light (sometimes slight) humorous ones: something for nearly every taste.

Two historical stories offer children a look at different worlds; *The Minstrel in the Tower*, by Gloria Skurzynski, tells of a dangerous journey undertaken by two children in twelfth century Europe. Their father has never returned from the Crusades, and their mother lies ill; they must find their uncle, a nobleman, to get his help. A touch of feminism adds a twentieth century gloss to this otherwise time-focused piece. *Next Spring an Oriole*, by Gloria Whelan, is the story of a pioneering family whose covered wagon takes them from the settled, civilized world of Tidewater, Virginia to the wilds of Michigan in 1837, where native Americans offer help and advice to the advancing white population—a vital perspective.

Jean Marzollo's *The Pizza Pie Slugger* and *Red Ribbon Rosie* are sports stories. Both are more than "who will win?" sports stories; in each the boy or girl at the center faces a complication involving an important relationship and learns to be a good sport in a larger way.

Julian is a character created by Ann Cameron, in *Julian, Secret Agent* and several other books. Julian, his friends and family, are black Americans — a distinction shown in the illustrations of the books rather than in ethnic particulars. As a secret agent, Julian sets out to find the criminals from the "wanted" posters in the Post Office. Ms. Cameron's first person narration sometimes creeps toward the "cute," but the kids are real kids, going after the very kinds of adventures most kids are certain they'd love—with results that surprise them.

The final title this time is a hardcover book from Macmillan, one of the longer chapter books, at 80 pages. Of special interest to those who know Helen Cresswell's Bagthorpe Saga ("Reading Room" #1) there is a new Cresswell chapter book, *Time Out*, (delightfully illustrated by Peter Elwell). This book is a terrific way to introduce the youngest readers to British humor and Cresswell's antic fantasies. On October 8, 1887, Ethel (the parlormaid), Tweeny (the twelve year old "betweenmaid") and Wilks (the butler), a family of domestic servants in the employ of the Vexhall-Smiths of London, take an unexpected trip through time, courtesy of an antique book about witchcraft. (Wilks has been practicing spells.) With the flavor of "Upstairs, Downstairs" and the specialness of *The Borrowers*, this book carries the reader from a witching error that turned Eth's cat bright green to the Wilks family's horrified confrontation with London in the late twentieth century. It's hard to say whether Creswell's style, her characterization (the parrot—and even the aspidistra—are memorable) or the story itself make this book so special, but special it is. It is likely to appeal to somewhat older readers, but the young ones should like it, too, if there is someone at hand to help them with the language from time to time. It's a good vehicle, too, for discussing the differences between American and English English.

Chapter books, chosen carefully, can give young readers precisely the blend of thrilling or entertaining story, challenging language and solid literary value that have long been available for the middle grades.

Stephanie Tolan, from Waterford, New York, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child*.

well as forging new connections between the underlying elements of whole sequences of thought or action, is important. Both limitations and mistakes are used to produce something different and new, something whose essence cannot be completely known because it is always changing. Because of this, the essences of things become known in different ways at different times (Nachmanovitch, 1990). Children who are improvisers are quintessential divergent thinkers. Allowed to follow their natural bent of playing with things, they can produce an astonishing amount of material, although that material may not be well formulated. Not all improvisations go somewhere, but all are part of the child's continual experiment with the environment, and with the self. Unfortunately, many of these extreme creators are trapped in a world in which little value is placed on their whole way of being.

Divergent thinkers are those who prefer unusual, uncommon, original and creative responses (Lovecky, 1990). In fact, they often do not think of, and sometimes cannot even understand, the common sense interpretation of things. While, for the purposes of this article, divergent thinking ability is found in highly creative individuals, it is useful to realize that thinking divergently is not the same as thinking creatively. People who think divergently can be idiosyncratic thinkers; that is, they think in a way that has little relationship to moral codes and common human experience. Some examples of idiosyncratic thinkers are those who live in a world of their own, including those who are psychotic. While some of these can be creative also, the vast majority are not. A person who thinks he is a famous historical figure is not creative. He is not pretending, nor is he using imagination to create something new. In the same way, those who think themselves above the law (sociopaths and psychopaths) can think divergently but are not creative.

Thus, in this article, **divergent thinkers are those who are imaginative and creative though they might not produce concrete products.** The focus is on the divergent thinking ability rather than on the creativity per se; that is, on the thinking process and how it impacts on the person and his or her interactions with others, rather than on the process of creative production.

Some divergent thinkers can choose the time and place in which they exercise imagination. Others cannot turn off their thinking at all, and are extreme fantasizers much of the time. According to Lynn and Rhue (1988), between 2% and 4% of their 6,000 college student sample tended to extreme fantasy proneness. Compared with those who were less fantasy prone, they also showed associated differences in suggestibility, tolerance for ambiguity, creativity and imagination.

Extreme fantasizers tend to be primary process thinkers, using material as it appears full blown from the unconscious. Thus, these children never know quite what they are going to say or do in any situation.

Another aspect of divergent thinking is "pun-proneness." Celia, the child in the introduction, showed unusual and shifting associations to words and phrases (such as "ceiling wax," for "sealing wax") and all the mental images these associations conjure up. This is one type of pun-proneness. Another type involves a continually shifting visual-perceptual field, so that while most people can make clouds take on different shapes, pun-prone divergent thinkers do the same thing almost anywhere they look. Regular solid objects can take on sinister tones because as perceptions shift, so do feelings. Some of these children constantly shift perceptions so they never quite know what is real and what is not, particularly in ambiguous situations, such as those that are emotionally charged.

Divergent thinkers who are fantasy and pun-prone are suggestible and have a high tolerance for ambiguity. Because the meaning of things constantly shifts, they have to learn to deal with the unpredictability of the world. Some do this by learning not to question too deeply what they see or hear, accepting things at face value. Others hold to their own beliefs and ways of doing things to an extreme degree. For these latter children, following their own vision brings them closer to the real essences of things, and they resist any attempt by others to take them away from this exploration. In fact, for most of these extremely divergent thinkers, doing things someone else's way just doesn't make any sense. What these children learn is that they can never believe anything unless they have examined it carefully and found it to be true within themselves, for themselves. The divergent thinker is always an experimenter and a tester.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH DIVERGENT THINKING ABILITY

Performance and behavior at school are often issues for highly divergent thinkers. They tend to be disorganized and absent-minded. The organizational schema used by adults for schoolwork seems alien since it is based on a step-by-step format, while these children tend to learn best using a more holistic approach. In fact, not only are their perceptions constantly shifting, but also, all their thoughts and feelings are interconnected, and, consequently, equally *(Continued on page 8)*

interesting and important. Furthermore, many have a unique style of learning. Because of their high tolerance for ambiguity and constant improvisation around interesting material, they like to follow interesting tangents which can serve as interconnectors between material that would seem disparate to anyone else. The artificial boundaries around subjects, and the division of curriculum into tiny bite size pieces chafe at them. Some have trouble organizing thoughts or starting projects because they cannot set priorities. It appears to them that there is no good starting place, and that no one piece can be used, because nothing stands out for them as most significant. All the material is equally interesting and deserving of further exploration.

The highly divergent thinker does not choose to be different, does not understand why he or she is, and experiences the pain of rejection without understanding what is going wrong.

Since these children cannot turn off their thinking to conform to the teacher's way of doing things, their grades are apt to suffer. As they proceed in school, they tend to do brilliantly creative, but uneven work. On papers and essays, teachers are apt to comment that their ideas are quite original, but poorly organized or developed. Also, many highly divergent thinkers see different points of view in the material. Since many teachers look for one or two main points to be learned from the material, these ideas are often less well attended to. To divergent thinkers, it feels as if no one values their ideas or opinions, and that certain opinions are seen as facts by teachers. Often, this means the most valuable parts of themselves do not count, are not valued by the school and teachers, and are actively criticized in ways that other student's opinions and selves are not.

The usual reward systems at school, and sometimes at home, are apt to be ignored by divergent thinkers. The excitement of doing a novel activity or of satisfying their curiosity is often more rewarding than adult initiated rewards. They may refuse awards they get, or reject the system that hands out the rewards. In fact, because they feel undervalued themselves, they may not value the achievements of others nor the authorities that legitimize certain types of achievement. Consequently, to some adults they appear rebellious, inattentive, disaffected, and unmotivated. Adults also may have trouble with the child's creativity on another level. While they may admire the creative *product*, they have trouble with the *process* of creativity, particularly the ideas that the essence of creative thinking is rebellion against some accepted standard. Many adults, especially those in authority, would rather divergent thinkers would turn it off except for circumscribed situations, for example, for a task they have set.

The divergent thinker also experiences social hazards. Being different—someone who does not see or feel things the same way most others do, who does not, therefore, conform well, and who cannot maintain the status quo—is especially difficult. The highly divergent thinker does not choose to be different, does not understand why he or she is, and experiences the pain of rejection without understanding what is going wrong. For them, being different is more than merely being eccentric. Many divergent thinkers do not understand how others think and feel. What seems commonplace to most people does not seem so to the divergent thinker. A sense of self usually results, in part, from seeing oneself and others as alike in some ways. This forges emotional connections with important others and allows the child to feel validated. This perceived likeness to others is a basis for social interaction.

The divergent thinker is a unique self. If he or she can find value in uniqueness, and some tolerance from society, a strong sense of self can develop. In fact, if we consider a self/society dichotomy, the more a divergent thinker a person is, the more likely he or she is to find a unique self; also, unfortunately, the more likely he or she is to have to hide it. Because of the way society views conformity, girls who are highly creative are often at special risk for social censure and isolation. Many retreat into books, or develop a "thorny" exterior in order to hide their vulnerability to social rejection (Kerr, 1985).

Children who are extreme divergent thinkers tend to have emotional issues related to feeling different. Both self image and interconnectedness to others can be problematic. These children can feel entirely alone, with no one to understand them, and they are at risk for depression and other emotional disturbances.

INTERVENTIONS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

The goal of parents, teachers, and counselors is to help the child find some validation for the creative self, while helping him or her to learn how to handle living in a less than appreciative world.

While it is somewhat of a truism that few geniuses are appreciated in their own times, it is nonetheless true that throughout history the very creative *(Continued on page 9)*

and very different person has had a harder life than many. What has helped many creative people to survive the rigors of a hard life is:

- a devotion to art
- a focus on process instead of product
- a freeing of the spirit through play with creative materials
- the following of a life-long dream.

For these kinds of creators, practice is not drudgery but always an experience of something new and different (Nachmanovitch, 1990). **Thus, helping creative children learn to focus on the joy of the process of creating without expecting perfect products will allow them to find the spirit of inner play that then nourishes them and their creativity. This means finding work, even at an early age, that the child can love more than anything, and helping the child find scheduled, but inviolate space and time, in which to pursue that loved work.**

Developing appropriate risk-taking behaviors is very important. Because unsolicited criticism can kill creative endeavor by damaging the vulnerable self-in-process, people who work with highly creative children need to engage in criticism carefully. Children need to learn how to use the opinions of others to see something in a new light rather than feeling that the creative production was no good. This can be done by helping the child voice opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of any creative production. Not all creative attempts will work—the child needs the right to show or not show these without fear that grades will suffer for doing some work that might not be good enough. This is the essence of teaching risk taking behavior in a safe way: **allowing experimentation without penalty.** Also, validation of the positives of the work *(what are its strengths; how does it work as a whole; what feelings does it elicit in the audience: what part is most in tune with the persona of the commentator)* is much more valuable than praise. In fact, many creative children do not value praise, and find it produces negative feelings.

Since, to the child, the process and product **are** the unique self, valuing these as well as the child, means the child feels wholly valued. This valuing helps the divergently thinking child to feel connected to at least some other people, so that they feel sometimes understood, and not entirely alone. Even children can face great rejection and stress, *if they feel that there is at least one person who truly cares about them* (Webb, Meckstroth, and Tolan, 1982).

Divergently thinking children who have been rejected by peers due to their eccentric thoughts and behaviors may need some help with understanding how they appear to others, and which particular behaviors tend to keep others away. Since many divergent thinkers do not really understand how others think and feel, parents and teachers of such children need to explain to them what the most common way of thinking about some issues might be, describe how most people would behave in certain situations and why, and help them to learn to make choices about when to show their eccentric selves and when to adopt camouflage.

Because highly divergent thinkers tend to shift perspectives relatively fast, they often lose the focus of concentration in many areas, including ordinary conversations. This occurs because they have wandered off on a tangent that they then voice. Part of the problem is that they do not understand the social purpose of conversation and how it is different from sharing ideas and feelings with a trusted friend. Helping children be more aware of social conventions gives them a choice about conforming or going their own way. Some children will also need special support when they decide not to join peers in approved peer activities. Boys who refuse to play ball, adolescents who are not deeply involved in conversations about the opposite sex, and children in general who prefer their own company to being with popular children, may need lots of support in making these choices, and some understanding of consequences. **While these children cannot choose to be more like other children, they can choose how to be themselves.**

The long term task for divergent thinkers is to find a work to love, to develop a sense of self that the person can like and trust even if few others do, and to find some sources of validation that do not depend on conformity to an outside standard. To find and mold a suitable home and school environment that nurtures the person, as well as the talents, is an important goal for these gifted children.

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[1]"PUFF (THE MAGIC DRAGON)"
(Peter Yarrow, Leonard Lipton)
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becomes even more critical, Torrance (1977) argues, when we consider that the "...greatest strengths of disadvantaged and culturally different students are their creative skills and motivations..." (p. 174).

At a time when charges of elitism are almost constantly aimed at programs for the gifted, and the very word "gifted" serves as a red flag in many communities, parents and educators could do far worse than to consider the positive and beneficial impact a program centered on creativity and creative talent development might have in their respective communities. In my experience in several states, I have found that communities embrace and applaud the development of creativity and innovation, but often become divided over the merits of a "gifted" program.

I have found that communities embrace and applaud the development of creativity and innovation, but often become divided over the merits of a "gifted" program.

A wealth of programs and teaching strategies exists to develop and enhance the talents of creatively gifted students as well as the creative spark that exists in all students. The Future Problem Solving Bowl, Odyssey of the Mind, and Invent America! programs are three interscholastic activities which promote the development of creative thinking.

There are many, many excellent and valid curriculum approaches to utilize in the development of the creativity our gifted youth possess. I have personally found that the use of units of instruction in the study of inventions and inventing excite and challenge gifted students and tap into the innovative spirit they possess. Indeed, I am surprised the study of inventions and inventing is not a required subject in our schools. In a stellar article about teaching the invention process to gifted students, inventor and patent attorney, B. Edward Shlesinger, Jr. (1982), wrote:

> *It is important to recognize that the entire story of civilization is based on invention. Invention is historically one of the strongest driving forces in human affairs. If children can comprehend invention, they can better understand the past and present and predict the future more reliably. (p. 219)*

The idea of using inventions as a proper area of study for gifted and creative youth is not a new idea. More than 60 years ago, Leta Hollingworth wrote a rationale for including the study of inventions as one of the cornerstones of her curriculum for the gifted.

> *Others can conserve, but only the gifted can originate. Therefore, should not the education of the gifted be education for initiative and originality? To take their place in civilization, therefore, it would seem that the intellectually gifted need especially to know the history and evolution of the life of civilized man. (Hollingworth, 1926, p.313)*

There are many ways to approach the study of inventions and inventing with creative youth both in the home and at school. I find a chronological approach works well. Begin by attending to Hollingworth's dictum. Give students a sense of history. How did the rich technological world they have inherited evolve? Who are the great inventors? Do they know, for example, the name of the man who invented paper (Ts'ai Lun, China, c. 100 A.D), or the 10 most significant developments in the history of the automobile? The study of inventors provides creative students with a stimulating introduction to biography. Excellent biographies of major inventors such as Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Alexander Graham Bell are plentiful both in libraries and better bookstores. With inexpensive table paper or newsprint, students can construct creative and instructive timelines about the evolution of inventions in a single field such as aviation or display the development of inventions of a particular nation like China or the USA. Instructive debates at the family dinner table or in the classroom may center upon topics such as the greatest inventor or invention of all time.

Students can greatly profit from a study of contemporary history. Monumental changes are occurring in our own recent past as well. At the close of the 1980s decade, Robert M. White (1989), president of the National Academy of Engineering, hailed the 10 outstanding engineering achievements of the last 25 years. White's list included these innovations:

- The moon landing
- Satellites for communication, weather forecasting, etc.
- The microprocessor or computer chip
- Computer-aided design and manufacturing
- The CAT scan and other imaging devices for medical diagnoses
- Advanced composite materials used to make products lighter and stronger
- The jumbo jet
- Lasers
- Fiber-optic communication
- Genetically engineered products in medicine, agriculture and industry

What a splendid list this is for creatively gifted youth to study. Each one of these breakthroughs has a unique *(Continued on page 12)*

history to be learned and appreciated. Innovative youth will also use history to bridge the past and present and will hypothesize future developments in each of these 10 technological arenas.

A study of the rich history of inventions would be quite incomplete without an examination of the role played by creative and innovative women. Happily, Vare and Ptacek (1988) provide one fine resource for such study in *Mothers of Invention: A History of Forgotten Women and Their Unforgettable Inventions.*

Numerous strategies may be employed to develop the creativity and innovation of gifted youth both at home and in the classroom. All inventions do not have to be technological gadgets. U.S. patents may be secured for designs. In 1879, A. Bartoldi received U.S. Patent No. 11,023 for his design invention, a statue titled "Liberty, Enlightening the World." Creative youth may design a new set of personalized greeting cards for the family to give to friends to mark a variety of occasions. Ornaments and decorations can be created for a wide array of holidays, birthdays, and other special events celebrated by the family. Michelle Alexander, a creative 9 year-old girl, invented a board game called "Give Peace a Chance" which has been played by several world leaders and has been translated into several foreign languages for use around the world. Inventions do not have to be products totally new to the world, either. Indeed, most patents are awarded for improvements to existing products. Can you build a better mousetrap? Many innovative people must believe it can be done. The first U.S. patent for a mousetrap was awarded in 1838. Since that time an additional *3,300* patents for mousetraps have been awarded! Challenge creative youth to survey the environments where they live and work. How might they find better, quicker, or more efficient ways to complete home and school tasks?

Several exciting and challenging invention programs and contests have evolved across the nation in the past decade. For complete details about these programs contact PROJECT X-L, United States Department of Commerce, Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D. C. 20231.

It may be unrealistic to suggest that a 10 year-old child should be revolutionizing the world with a sophisticated new product, but it is never too soon to dream about the future or to construct visions of what the future will be like.

Just as creative youth should appreciate the past and comprehend the present, they should also anticipate the future. Walt Disney is but one of the many individuals credited with coining the word "Imagineering." Creative students should be about the work of imagineering our collective futures. It may be unrealistic to suggest that a 10 year-old child should be revolutionizing the world with a sophisticated new product, but it is never too soon to dream about the future or to construct visions of what the future will be like. For the past 5 years, I have worked cooperatively with the *Gazette-Telegraph*, the major newspaper in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in asking young people in grades kindergarten through high school to share their positive images of the future by writing scenarios. The most popular topic to date has been "Invention: The Heartbeat of the Future." One second-grade student utilized his considerable imagineering talent to write about his conception of future gravity-free playgrounds for children that would *(Continued on page 12)*

serve as playgrounds to simultaneously acclimate children to zero gravity and train future astronauts. A secondary student imagineered a medical procedure called the "lazermold" which could be employed by future surgeons to soften the molecular structure of damaged bones, reshape them, and then harden them back to their original, healthy state.

Creative youth can imagineer future schools and design curricula for their prospective grandchildren who will be students in the late 21st century. Similar attention can be given to future transportation, recreational facilities, and workplaces.

Regardless of whether gifted students dream about the future, examine the past, or immerse themselves in inventing ways and means to effectively interact with their present environments, they will be engaged in significant and meaningful inquiry. Their creativity will be utilized, developed, and enhanced. Innovation will take root and flourish.

Civilization marches ever forward in a grand parade. Surely, the cadence of that march is invention and the drummers have ever been and no doubt will continue to be the creatively and innovatively gifted.

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See the box on page 12 for a provocative look at Leonardo da Vinci.

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Self-actualizing creativeness is emitted, like radioactivity, and hits all of life, regardless of problems, just as a cheerful person emits cheerfulness without purpose or design or even consciousness. It is emitted like sunshine; it spreads all over the place; it makes some things grow (which are growable) and is wasted on rocks and other ungrowable things.

—Abraham H. Maslow—

Underachiever or Misunderstood?

Jerry D. Flack, Ph.D.

On many occasions I have used a simulation in my classes to examine our conceptions of underachievement among gifted and talented students. I present the students with profiles of two seemingly underachieving gifted students. What the students do not know in advance is the true identity of the two "students": Michelangelo Buonarotti and Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo's profile includes these descriptors:

- Does not finish projects he starts
- Has *terrible* handwriting
- Draws machines and weapons for which no practical use can be imagined
- Is unreliable; you never know if he will finish a job you give him to do
- Has too many interests; he seems incapable of focusing on one idea and seeing it through to completion

By most contemporary standards or definitions, this portrait of the "student" Leonardo is one of an underachiever. But, the true story of Leonardo's genius should serve to caution us from being overly quick in our labeling of underachievers. Da Vinci did not finish many projects because of the wars and political upheavals that occurred in his lifetime, rather than from any lack of persistence. Although he did not have the tools to build many of the inventions he forecasted, Leonardo can hardly be faulted because his imagination was light years ahead of the technology of his lifetime. He can be credited as the first to conceive of the machine gun, tank, submarine, snorkel, diving suit, internal combustion engine, air conditioner, parachute, helicopter, and differential transmission.

Leonardo's "terrible" handwriting also bears further investigation. Roberto Guatelli has spent his lifetime studying the notebooks of Leonardo and constructing models from the great master's sketches. Guatelli persuasively argues that da Vinci's backwards handwriting was not an attempt to conceal his ideas from others. He points out that anyone with a mirror could easily decode the words. Rather, Guatelli believes that Leonardo was ambidextrous, and so consumed by his art and work that to avoid wasting any time at all, he wrote with his left hand while he simultaneously sketched with his right hand! Of da Vinci's incredible productivity, Guatelli writes, "If you worked eight hours a day, six days a week, just copying the sketches alone, it would take you *60 years* to finish (p. 90).

A rather remarkable underachiever! How many mislabeled Leonardos do we have in our American classrooms today?

Source: Wiley, J.P., Jr. (1987). A devoted modeler gives shape to a genius. *Smithsonian, 18,* (August), p. 90.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL: *A Journal on Adult Giftedness*

Gifted children usually have gifted parents. If you are wondering about your own giftedness, subscribe to **Advanced Development: *A Journal on Adult Giftedness.*** No other journal focuses specifically on gifted adults. Unlike the traditional view of adult giftedness as high levels of productivity and creativity, advanced development in adults is defined as the deepening of the personality and strengthening of human values such as empathy, concern for others, responsibility and integrity.

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Linda Kreger Silverman

ERSONALITY PLUS

Emotional Intensity

Creatively gifted children and adults are emotionally intense and have rich inner lives (Piechowski, 1991). An enhanced capacity for feeling is essential to the production of great art, moving music, high drama, memorable prose and poetry, exquisite performances. We love to watch the ecstatic absorption of a conductor, the passionate portrayal of Othello, and the dedicated delicacy of a ballerina. To be **passionately** in love with one's work provides a sense of meaning to one's existence; it is truly one of Life's great blessings.

Why, then, do we become so disturbed when we see the precursors to this passionate involvement in young children? Emotional intensity is one of the personality concomitants of giftedness. It is natural for the gifted to feel deeply and to experience a broad range of emotions. Dabrowski and Piechowski (1977) called this heightened capacity for feeling "emotional overexcitability," and found that it is strongly correlated with high intelligence. Piechowski (1991) defines emotional overexcitability as "the great depth and intensity of emotional life expressed through a wide range of feelings, attachments, compassion, heightened sense of responsibility, and scrupulous self-examination" (p. 287). Dabrowski saw the sensitivity and emotional extremes of the creative individual as positive potential for higher level development.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture that does not view heightened emotionality in a very positive way. The first message an infant often hears is, "Hush, now, don't cry." And this message is reiterated throughout childhood—particularly to boys. The main lesson students learn in school is how to control, repress, deny their emotions, as part of the socialization process. But repressing one's emotions also represses one's vitality, which may be one of the reasons students have difficulty staying motivated to learn. Motivation is emotional, not intellectual.

Guidance in dealing with intensity and emotional sensitivity in gifted children is provided by Piechowski (1991):

> *The intensity of emotional reactions...in [gifted] children may sometimes be difficult to understand, especially when...the child is strongly upset over "nothing." It requires considerable patience and knowledge of the child to see that this "overreaction" comes from the child's sensitivity and the need for his or her own order of things to be preserved.... To a sensitive and intense child who may be disequilibrated often by his or her own emotions, departure from something routinely expected, for example, the way a story is told, may be extremely upsetting simply because the need for support is all the greater. The strongest support, without doubt, is the parent's loving patience and acceptance. (pp. 287, 289)*

Our responsibility as parents and teachers of the gifted is not to teach them to curb their emotions, nor is it to tolerate their feelings. Our task is be emotionally alive ourselves, as good role models, and to honor these children's sensitivity as a positive trait. Otherwise, we risk contributing to societal corrosion of healthy emotional development. We are in greater danger of emotional mediocrity than of intellectual mediocrity—and this rampant lack of sensitivity is life-threatening to our planet. Emotional intensity in children should be supported, not squelched.

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Suzanne M. Perry

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

Food: Eating It Up (Part II)

In the last issue, we discussed the importance of nurturing bodies as well as minds. In this issue, we will describe fun activities around food.

At the grocery store, the parent's first task is to get the able young child to do something other than ask for a million items the parent doesn't want him or her to have. An interesting study that came out of the University of North Carolina (reported in McCarthy, 1985) found that parents can expect to be asked by their children to buy something specific *72 times an hour* while grocery shopping! The parents observed in the study didn't give in very often—only about 14 percent of the time. Surprisingly, those who did cave in to their child's demands did not decrease the number of requests made of them. In fact, the child would often accept the item and then almost immediately ask for another thing.

A number of different methods were used by parents to avoid requests. Thirty-two percent used reasoning strategies; 25 percent used power assertion where the parent would say, "No, I said you can't have that," or simply take it away. Fifteen percent of the mothers simply ignored all requests by murmuring something like, "Yes, I know you want that," but did nothing about it. Only 7 percent tried to divert the child's attention in some way.

The only methods that really worked were diverting the child's attention away from the desired object and reasoning. These are exactly the strategies that can be most effective in encouraging learning in gifted children. Depending on readiness, as you whip around the aisles gathering up necessities, you can chat with your child about colors, numbers of things, unit pricing and getting the most for your money. Older children can be given a coupon and sent on an expedition (within eyeshot) for a certain item. Then the child can be asked to calculate how much money will be saved at the checkout stand when the coupon is used. This can be even more challenging when your store offers double or triple coupons. Little ones can learn about *cold* in the freezer case, *round* with the paper plates and *soft* with the bathroom tissue. Plenty of possibilities there, once you give it some thought.

When you get the food home, the real fun begins. Little guys of almost any age can somewhat assist in food preparation. The only way my One ever learned to like salad was because her first cooking experience was tearing lettuce into a bowl. Who doesn't like what they cook themselves? There are several terrific kids' cookbooks out that are full of ideas. The ultimate, to me, is *Kinder Krunchies*, available through Discovery Toys. This book, which was written by two primary teachers, has at least one recipe for every letter of the alphabet. None of the recipes contain refined sugar and all are easy to prepare, with plenty of helpful pictures. Mini 4H's *Fun With Food* book is also outstanding and should be available through your local extension service.

Once kids get the hang of following recipes, it's time to start creating original concoctions. A positive way to start is to lay out a variety of ingredients—say, coconut, a little cinnamon, chopped nuts, grated carrot, diced apple and cooked rice—that couldn't be too terrible no matter how you combine them, and let your child decide how much of which to mix up. Provide assistance in recording the recipe for posterity and eat the offering with as much relish as you can muster. Salad vegetables along with grated cheese, sesame seeds, sunflower nuts, crumbled bacon and croutons make for another ideal invented recipe. A "Cooperation Salad" is fun around holiday time when each child or family member prepares and adds one special creative ingredient to a salad.

If "we are what we eat," then the attention we pay to nurturing our capable little learner through selecting and preparing food together will be time well spent.

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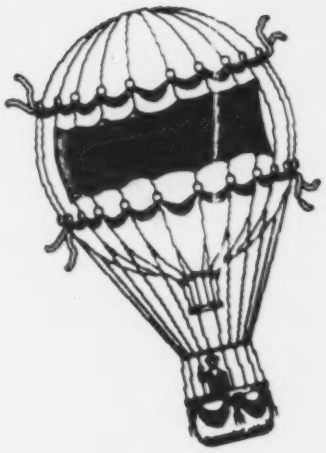
Suzanne M. Perry, Ph.D., is Instructional Resource for Project Think in the Aurora Public Schools in Colorado, and author of the children's book, *Giftedness: Living with it and Liking it.*

IN SEARCH OF SERENDIPITY



Creative Ventures And Encounters

Jerry Flack
Tour Guide

Wise teachers and parents promote creativity and innovation at every possible turn in the daily lives of gifted students, both at home and at school. The activities listed for this journey should encourage young people to begin thinking and behaving like inventors. These invention strategies may be used for individual or small group work in the classroom as worthy substitutes for the "busywork" gifted students rightfully dislike, or they may be used in the home as family games and discussion topics. The activities are from the author's book, *Inventing, Inventions, and Inventors* (Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1989).

- Tomato juice is fancied for its many supposed cures such as getting rid of skunk odors. Invent a new use for tomato juice. Describe the procedure of usage. How might the word of the new discovery be spread?
- Invent a new slogan to encourage tourism in a particular city, region, or state. Conversely, what slogan might keep pesky tourists at a distance?
- List:
  - 10 inventive uses for old newspapers
  - 10 uses for out-of-date calendars
  - 10 things to do with old tires
  - 10 new uses for a birdbath
  - 10 uses for a surfboard in Alaska
  - 10 uses for snowtires in Hawaii
  - 10 uses for old lampshades
  - 10 uses for old sneakers
- Invent a new line of greeting cards. What might be the theme and the appeal of these cards? Cards will be needed for all occasions: birthdays, weddings, graduations, get well, and special holidays. How will the central theme or motif carry across all of the cards? Begin creating this new line of greeting cards.
- Something dreadful has occurred at the U.S. Patent Office. An entire carton of pending patents has been accidentally destroyed. Only the names of the inventions remain (they were on a manifest list that survives). Be creative and reinvent these now-missing inventions. Be sure to include diagrams as well as verbal descriptions:
  - a homework machine which guarantees all A's
  - a bedroom mess picker-upper
  - a mechanical school lunchroom supervisor
  - an envelope and stamp licker.
- Invent a "thingamabob" which uses all six simple machines *(lever, inclined plane, pulley, screw, wedge, wheel and axle)*. What task(s) does the new contraption perform?
- Invent a device or process that will keep an ice cube frozen for the longest time possible.
- Invent a procedure or device that will arrest the speed at which a ball bearing or marble released from a height of 3 feet will reach the ground. Have a contest among family members or classmates to see who can, over a period of one month, achieve the slowest drop time.

(Continued on page 18)

ANTENNA . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

In the early 70's I stood before a local Board of Education and requested not only an appropriate education, but an excellent one, for my two-year-old child who was already reading fluently. He received neither.

For 20 years that this columnist is aware of—and many decades before that, I'm told—gifted education has been on a roller coaster ride of interest and apathy, commitment and resentment. It has journeyed through the shifting scenery of open classroom, mainstreaming, individualization and equity. And now it is caught in the uncertainties of site based management, cooperative learning, middle school, the ban on ability grouping and school reform.

We frequently consider the notion that gifted education could be good for all students. Alan White (1989) states that:

> *...differentiated services for gifted students are likely to become unacceptably watered down when it is assumed that everything these students need could be provided in the regular classroom. While good classroom teachers have always attempted to individualize instruction, the fact is that they have only limited time, resources and training to provide sustained high-level instruction for gifted and talented children...This tendency will seriously compromise the intensity and level of challenge needed by the gifted.*

Will schools of choice and a resurgence of interest in a voucher system bring gifted education charging forward again or will the alleged barrier of elitism block it forever? Linda A. Tammi (1990) discusses Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Harrison Bergeron*, which takes place in the year 2081, when everyone is finally equal, and handicapping devices prevent talented people from "taking unfair advantage of their brains" (p. 44).

Tammi states that such "confusion of excellence, elitism, and equality—a confusion that may be uniquely American—has contributed to the widespread misconception that programs for the academically gifted are elitist" (p. 44).

Today, gifted students are in danger of having their abilities suppressed. Vonnegut's depiction of a "U.S. Handicapper General" enforcing a national standard for mediocrity gives me goose bumps as it threatens to break out of its fictional restraints.

Can we look to the Federal Office of Gifted and Talented for leadership in an era of under-researched school restructuring? The Federal Office could help educators and parents of gifted and talented students to get off the roller coaster. It needs to promote the message that we have always been involved in school reform, and that our goal of eliminating mediocrity is not elitist.

Equality in education is not the issue, but rather the awareness of individual needs of children and how to meet them effectively and excellently. Surely, the education of gifted and talented children IS excellence. But, sadly, my son—and many gifted youngsters—had to struggle through their schooling without excellence. They survived in spite of the school system and not because of it. How many fell off the roller coaster at the bottom?

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Dorothy Knopper is a Private Consultant on the Gifted in Colorado and "Open Space" columnist for *Roeper Review*.

Creative Ventures *(Continued)*

- The nation's largest automobile manufacturer has put out a call for designs for a new super car. This new car must have a new look, and must feature a design that is aerodynamically efficient. Design a new car which meets these criteria. Draw the vision of the next car from several perspectives: front, back, side, interior, above. If the automobile has a special identifying emblem or crest, this should also be featured in the portfolio that will be presented to the manufacturer.

Help create tomorrow's inventors by inviting today's youth to make innovative thinking a regular and natural part of each day.

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and editor of *G/T News*.

Education for creativity is nothing short of education for living.

—Erich Fromm—

Lisa Ferguson

from parent to parent

It's quite a struggle to foster creativity and encourage individuality. Most of us want our kids to stand out from the crowd—but not too far out. Most kids want to be different—the same way all the other kids are different.

Cheryl Steele Oakes, parent of three gifted boys (ages 7, 5, and 2), and K-3 learning disabilities teacher in Sanford, Maine, sees the pressure to conform affecting children earlier now. Despite that pressure the creativity of gifted children stands out.

"It seems to me that gifted kids' creativity is different because they don't censor their creativity the way that other children do. They don't submit as easily or as early on to the conditioning that seems to affect their classmates.

"With learning disabled gifted kids, that creativity can make them look odd. One of my first graders insisted on making his clothespin reindeer by using the clothespin in a horizontal position. The other children used them vertically, as antlers or as legs. And it wasn't until he finished that we could see his way was just as good. This was also a good example of how the end result may not be clear. Parents and teachers need to wait till the child gets to the end of what they're doing to see where they're going. Give them time to do it their own way."

Opportunities for enhancing creativity are ever present.

"Choices should not be limited. For example: Early on, when children are coloring they will color common objects in unconventional colors. It's very tempting for parents and teachers to ask, 'What colors are apples *really*?' Children need the latitude to give an apple any color that they want to.

"When there's a product it's easy to step back and allow that creative freedom to happen, but it's not as easy when the assignment is to set the table, answer test questions, eat supper or pick up their toys. Instead of jumping in and saying, 'This is the fastest way,' we need to give them a chance to show us their way.

"Another important time to allow creativity is during testing. Creative kids will give unique answers that we don't recognize as valid until we reflect on them. Examiners should write down the answer, to be considered later. It's especially important with a creative child—they aren't going to learn in a conventional way, and they're not going to spit information back at you in the classroom or in a testing situation, because they will see a million different ways it could be used."

Lisa Ferguson is from Haverill, Massachusetts and the parent of highly gifted children.

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ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT

Advanced Development, the first journal on adult giftedness, will be publishing its third annual volume in February, 1991. The theme of the issue is "The Possible Human," featuring the work of Jean Houston. Subscription rate is currently $15 for individuals or institutions. See order form on page 13.

Midstates Conference on Gifted and Talented

March 7-8, 1991. Includes Colorado, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, South Dakota and Wyoming. Ramada Hotel, Denver, Colorado. Registration deadline, February 15th. Contact Dorothy Knopper, 2769 Iris Ave., Suite 110, Boulder, CO 80304, (303) 444-7020.

Supervisor, G/T Education Wanted

Des Moines Public Schools. Master's Degree, 5 years of K-12 teaching experience, training in gifted education. Salary range $44,000—$46,000. Closing: April 5, 1991. Send application and resume to Thomas E. Stokes, Director, Human Resources Mgmt., 1800 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50309-3399.

AEGUS: Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students

April 12-13, 1991. AEGUS presents its fourth annual conference—High Potential at Risk: Gifted Children with Special Needs. University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. For more information, contact Susan Levey, AEGUS, P.O. Box 359, Bedford Hills, NY 10507.

Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. will sponsor the Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Holland, from July 29-August 2, 1991. Workshops will deal with all aspects of Gifted Education and represent some 40 countries from around the world. English will be the official conference language.For more information and registration material, contact the North American Conference Representative: Richard E. Lange, 834 Inverrary Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015. (708) 537-6029.

FOCUS:

COUNSELING THE GIFTED

WEARING THEIR SHOES: Reversing Underachievement
F. Richard Olenchak, Ph.D.

MULTIPOTENTIALITY: A Constant Grieving Process
Jean M. Strop, Ph.D.

All ordinary expression may be explained causally, but creative expression, which is the absolute contrary of ordinary expression, will be forever hidden from human knowledge.
— Carl Gustav Jung —

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UNDERSTANDING OUR GIFTED

Dedicated to helping gifted children reach their full potential

March - April, 1991

Volume 3, Issue 4

FOCUS ON:

COUNSELING THE GIFTED

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Wearing Their Shoes: Role Playing to Reverse Underachievement

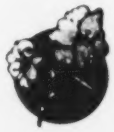
F. Richard Olenchak, Ph.D.

Year after year, Ken would approach school in the same way: excited to return to the classroom for additional time with his friends but not exactly thrilled at the prospects of what he called "the rest of school," meaning the assignments and other expectations imposed by teachers and parents. While his friendships were not numerous, he had developed a strong relationship with one of his peers from the school gifted program and enjoyed participating in interests which they shared in common. As a result, Ken had become increasingly involved in a number of out-of-school activities including scouting, ice hockey, and a science club which he had founded with his best friend. The two boys had even developed a yard maintenance service which they actively pursued during their summers. However, there was one major difference between Ken and his good friend; while the friend continually excelled in *(Continued on page 8)*

Preventive Counseling for the Gifted

Linda Silverman, Ph.D.

Gifted children and youth need preventive counseling to assure healthy emotional development. The gifted personality is sensitive, perfectionistic, intense—creating a higher level of stress for the child. Moral issues affect gifted children more deeply and at an earlier age than their peers. Greater awareness of the world situation, of injustice, of the way things ought to be, coupled with feelings of powerlessness, can throw a gifted child into despair. Even children who appear well-adjusted and achieve high grades in school often suffer from feelings of inadequacy because their successes fall far short of their ideals. And beyond all these internal variables, gifted children face the task of living in a culture that rejects their differences, that tells them in a thousand subtle and not-so-subtle ways that it is not OK to be gifted. Many gifted children respond to societal pressures by hiding their abilities, some withdraw from painful social interaction, and still others resort to rebellion and acting out in the classroom. *(Continued on page 11)*



FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Spring! We've survived the winter and welcome the renewal that comes with this season. The war in the Middle East is over, and that, too, allows for the revitalization of spirits. But war has a powerful impact on the psyches of the gifted for whom nothing is black and white, and two of the columns in this issue deal with the effects of war on gifted children: The Reading Room and Parent to Parent. The crisis in the Persian Gulf is bound to raise many searching questions in our children for months to come.

The fact that General Schwarzkopf is reported to have an IQ of 170 may also have a far reaching impact on public attitudes toward the gifted. At one point in his television interview with Barbara Walters on March 15th, Schwarzkopf was on the verge of tears, and later stated that any man who can't cry "scares" him: "That's not a human being." Perhaps this attitude will help usher in a new era in which emotional development and expression will be equally available to males and females. Our special feature in this issue is an article by Dr. Deirdre "Dee" Lovecky on sensitivity in gifted boys. Dee will be offering more of her insights in future columns.

The theme of this issue, "Counseling the Gifted," focuses our attention on the emotional rather than the cerebral aspects of giftedness. The greater awareness and sensitivity that comes with extraordinary intelligence lead to inner conflicts that may not be well understood. For these reasons, counseling services should be an integral part of any program for the gifted. One of the lead articles, "Preventive Counseling for the Gifted," provides a blueprint for developmental counseling services, and "Walking in Their Shoes" describes how role playing can be used effectively with the gifted. Many of our regular columns also reflect the counseling theme.

Emotional and spiritual giftedness are the newest frontiers in research. Information about these areas may be found in the 3rd volume of ***Advanced Development***, which is hot off the press. ***Advanced Development*** is our companion publication on giftedness in adults. This issue features the work of Jean Houston and introduces a moral exemplar you will never forget: Etty Hillesum, a Dutch woman who went through a miraculous process of inner transformation during the holocaust. There is also an article by Annemarie Roeper about the emotions of gifted adults. It is a joy to share ***Advanced Development*** with you; I know you will find it inspiring. Ordering information is on page 15. Don't miss it, and if you find it meaningful, please pass the word about this exciting publication.

Linda Silverman

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The Sensitive Gifted Boy

Deirdre V. Lovecky, Ph.D.

One of the traits most often mentioned in relation to giftedness is sensitivity, that is, a depth and intensity of feeling in which the environment and other people affect the gifted child. Often sensitive gifted children feel other people's feelings, as well as feeling the impingement of environmental events. For example, one can be very sensitive to color, emotional nuances, the underlying meaning of art, music, or poetry. Sensitivity also suggests a certain degree of passion brought to various endeavors. The passionate response of gifted children, as they become deeply involved in various projects, is a sign of sensitivity. Feeling other people's feelings can also result in the development of empathy and compassion, sensitivity towards the feelings and needs of others.

One of the problems of gifted boys is the development of sensitivity towards others. In a world where boys are often competitive with a focus on winning and being best, many gifted boys learn to focus only on their own sensitivity. Because they feel so deeply, and because other people's feelings can bring them pain, many learn to shut out pain at an early age. In this society boys are not taught to use pain to advance emotionally or spiritually; instead they are taught to repress any signs of weakness in themselves, and to disparage these in others. The sensitive gifted boy is therefore at risk, both for being a target of other boys and adults who may feel he is "too sensitive," and for focusing on his own needs to the exclusion of developing adequate empathy and compassion for others.

Gifted boys need to learn how to understand other people (empathy) and to care about them (compassion). Understanding someone else's perspective does not mean agreeing, but that one comes to understand how another might feel, and why. The problem for many gifted boys is that they are taught their own needs are most important, that they are in charge, and that they should know how to fix everything. Many gifted boys do, in fact, have good ideas an how to do things, and they may have a deeper understanding of the problem in an analytic sense; they do not understand why others don't want them to help fix things, but instead, see their offer to help as arrogance or an attempt to take over. The subsequent anger of the gifted child who is not allowed to fix a problem he thinks he knows how to fix leads to more misunderstanding.

Empathy has to be taught early to gifted boys before they reach the age when society tells them they have to know all the answers, and before they learn to focus only on meeting their own needs. This means that parents have to be resourceful and persistent in teaching gifted boys how to think about the feelings and needs of others, and how to continue to be truly sensitive in a world that targets vulnerable males for ridicule.

Parents must model both empathy and compassion not only by attending to the gifted boy's needs and feelings, but also by teaching him to attend to the needs and feelings of others, including those of girls and women. The role model of adult males is especially important as boys will readily understand the message implicit in stereotypic families in which females do all the giving and males do all the receiving. Instead of males always getting first choice, it is more equitable for them to learn to take turns and give equal shares. Sometimes lessons in being last, and missing out on some things, are also valuable in teaching that one's needs are not always going to come first, but that one has to think of others' needs.

It is helpful to point out examples of insensitivity and lack of caring in the world, and to help gifted boys see what would be more caring. Trying to fix the problem isn't always the answer. Considering the problem from many points of view is much more helpful and, in the long run, compassionate. Pointing out role models who were compassionate and caring because they thought of others' needs (Albert Schweitzer, for example) can provide boys with heroes other than Rambo, the Ninja Turtles, and Batman, models of fixing problems and taking care of others without compassion.

Finally, helping the sensitive boy learn to suffer the pain he will invariably meet in the world because of his sensitivity is important. Suffering can bring emotional and spiritual growth. Providing a life without pain is depriving a gifted boy of the opportunity to develop the inner resources to deal with adversity and to grow.

Dr. Deirdre V. Lovecky, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical pyschologist in private practice in Providence, RI, and a frequent author of articles on giftedness in children and adults.

Martha J. Morelock

THE HIDDEN GIFTED LEARNER

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Our Own Projected Pasts

Childhood giftedness is a complex phenomenon. Unlike many other "conditions" of childhood for which a straightforward diagnosis can be made and prescribed plan of action laid out, planning for a gifted child's educational future can be a confusing and elusive undertaking. The endeavor can be complicated not only by difficulties in defining a child's particular needs, but also by the personal histories of all those adults participating in the planning process and the positive or negative emotional connotations which the idea of "giftedness" evoked for them.

Consider Elliot Talbott, a six-year-old boy completing the first grade. The question arises as to whether Elliot, whose reading and math skills have been assessed as being at the fourth grade level, should be admitted to a third grade classroom the following Fall. A parent-teacher conference is held to discuss the possibility. Present are Elliot's father and mother and Elliot's teacher, Mrs. Fairfield.

Elliot's father is set against accelerating his son. Fearing that the third grade environment would be too socially sophisticated for Elliot, he opts for a second grade classroom. Mr. Talbott argues that keeping Elliot with children his own age will provide important social experiences that Elliot risks missing if accelerated. When the possibility of incorporating enrichment activities is suggested, Mr. Talbott is ambivalent, emphasizing that he does not want Elliot to feel isolated from the rest of the children or to be "working separately in some corner of the classroom."

Mrs. Talbott, on the other hand, is enthusiastic about acceleration. She emphasizes Elliot's boredom with the grade-level work he has had to complete during the year, and she fears that he will learn to equate school with boredom. She is confident the social issues can be easily dealt with; the major problem is meeting Elliot's academic needs. She avers that enrichment activities are not enough—Elliot needs to be placed at a higher grade level and his work accelerated accordingly.

Mrs. Fairfield, too, feels positively about accelerating Elliot to the third grade. Furthermore, she feels that if Elliot does not seem challenged enough with the third grade curriculum, it might be possible to change him at mid-year to a fourth grade classroom. She minimizes the salience of the social issues, noting that sensitive teachers can facilitate Elliot's comfortable integration into whatever class he is in.

At first glance, it appears that each of these major adults in Elliot's life is straightforwardly assessing Elliot and his needs and proposing a solution to the problem. If we look a bit into each of their personal histories, however, a different picture emerges...

Mr. Talbott remembers his cousin Robert who was identified as gifted, skipped first grade and went directly into second. Throughout his elementary school years, Robert was excluded from the play of the older children and taunted. When he reached the middle school years, he was smaller, less physically adept than the other boys, and socially withdrawn. In seventh grade, he developed school phobia and refused to go to school.

Mrs. Talbott remembers her own grade school years as a gifted child. Her school offered no curriculum modifications for gifted children. She remembers the tedium of having to do numerous long division problems as "drill" work even after she had mastered the material. She remembers reading workbooks requiring her to respond to questions well below her level of comprehension. She remembers feigning illness to keep from going to school. And in later years, she remembers eventually dropping out of school rather than continue to endure the experience.

Mrs. Fairfield's younger brother was identified as highly gifted. Educated in a progressive community where the system provided a number of options for gifted children, he skipped second and fifth grades, eventually enrolling in an early entrance program for college. Throughout his school years, he remained academically challenged, enthusiastic about school, and socially accepted by his peers.

All of these scenarios represent different potential futures in the minds of the adults planning for Elliot's education. Having experienced the effects of a society traditionally insensitive to the needs of gifted children in the classroom, Mr. and Mrs. Talbott bring to their assessment of Elliot individual elements of fearfulness which may or may not be appropriate in Elliot's situation. Having seen the happy results of a gifted child for whom the right decisions *(Continued on page 15)*

Elizabeth Meckstroth

PARENTING

Invisibly Gifted

Like the third grader who entitled her autobiography, "Invisible Silvie," many astute, capable people grieve that they feel invisible....they veil their selves. As many gifted individuals have introverted personalities, they tend to protect and sequester their ardent thoughts so that what they seclude in silence may mean more than what they say and do. Like the proverbial iceberg, most is submerged.

Gifted people are complex and involved. I consulted with a national television network to prepare a documentary program on gifted children. As the scheduled filming week approached, the producers told me that they had never worked with a topic that caused such messy desks! Theirs were covered with slips of paper for ideas, names, and numbers! They had never started out with a subject that they thought would be so simple but became so complicated! The staff was working double time trying to narrow their focus.

Gifted people are infinite...like a coastline. From a great distance, the coast of Italy looks like a boot. But up close, the edge dips into inlets and jags out to sea. If the measuring tape followed the intricacies of Italy's edge, it would become much longer than the basic shape. Suppose a tiny section of a coastal rock were inspected by microscope and the measuring tape followed the minute lacy edges. How long would the coastline become then? What it is depends on how we measure it!

For most any characteristic we could use to describe a gifted child, we could use its opposite to describe another (some of the time). For example, some need only a few hours sleep, while others drag around on 12. Two children have an IQ of 143. One's strengths are reading and vocabulary, another's are visual-spatial abilities. Two children gifted in math might even differ, with one being astute at calculation and another at abstract concepts.

Gifted people may feel like aliens in a foreign world. They see and feel things that other people can't even imagine exist. Rarely can they find someone who shares their depth and breadth of consciousness.

I remember counseling with a 13-year-old girl who told me that her biggest problem was that she has to lie: "Well, it's just sort of lying, but if I tell people what I really think, they'll think I'm wierd." That facade is the living suicide that many gifted people adopt. They sever what they expect would bring ridicule and rejection.

How can we sustain our children's self-esteem so that they risk becoming visible?

- Take them seriously so that they experience, "I deserve to exist."
- Give them choices and let them learn from the results of their choices.
- Ask them what they need and explore plans to meet these needs.
- Encourage journal writing to discover parts of themselves.
- Honor their opinions as interesting ways to see a situation. You do not have to agree.
- Explain how you sometimes experience that what you think, feel, and know cannot be reality for other people.
- Know that you are the best parent your children could have!

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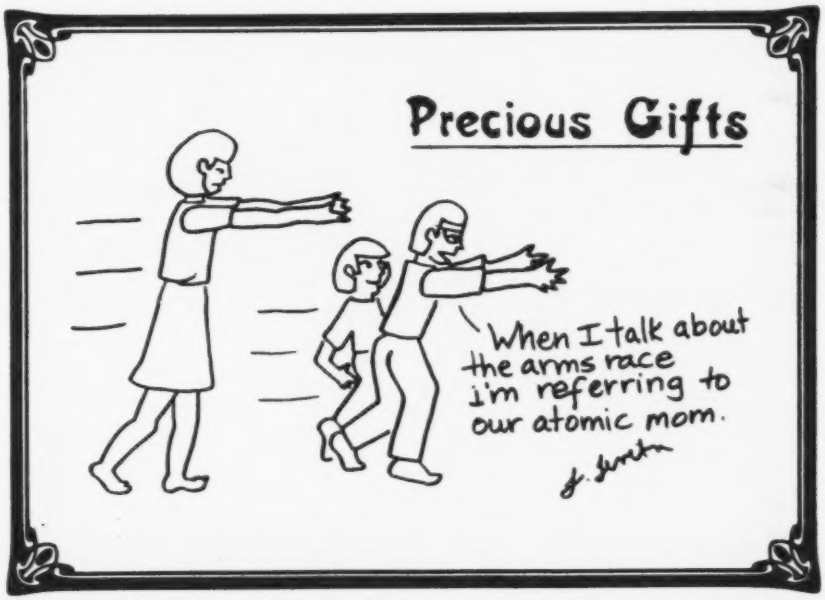

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Karen C. Nelson

APPLICATION: A Key to Qualitatively Differentiated Learning in the Sciences.

Application is the third level of the *Bloom Taxonomy Of Educational Objectives:* like knowledge and comprehension, it is presented as a foundation skill. For gifted students, however, application should incorporate higher level thinking skills.

In order to be defensible, gifted education must provide learning experiences which are qualitatively different from those in the regular classroom. A defensible goal of gifted education can be to help students become producers of knowledge, not just consumers. In this issue, we discuss a curricular approach for reaching this goal in the sciences. Next time, we'll discuss application as defensible differentiation in the arts.

Learning to Think Like a Scientist

We help students become science producers by teaching them to act like scientists, not just learn about science and scientists. A delightfully simple book to use in teaching elementary gifted children to apply the scientific method is *How to Think Like a Scientist* (Kramer, 1987). The book begins with a discussion of "How do you answer a question?" The scientific method as an answer to this question is presented as five steps (Kramer, 1987, p. 20):

1. *Ask a question.*
2. *Gather information about the question.*
3. *Form a hypothesis.*
4. *Test the hypothesis.*
5. *Tell others what you found.*

Explanations are as simple as the five steps: "A hypothesis is a guess that is based on observations" (Kramer, 1987, p.26). In equally clear language, the book explains how to use experimental and control groups in testing a hypothesis and suggests some questions that could become projects (Kramer, 1987, p. 39):

- *What kind of food does your dog like best?*
- *Does your father drive the car more on weekdays or on weekends?*
- *Is your older sister more likely to help you if you say please?*

For upper elementary/middle school children, *How to Do a Science Project and Report* (Gutnik, 1980) is a good resource. Other methodological books for the sciences and social sciences are available from Creative Learning Press. The secondary teacher may use introductory college tests as a basis for teaching science methods. In any case, Step 5 on Kramer's list above needs to be included: students need to find a forum for presenting results.

The goal of such learning is to nurture the spirit of scientific inquiry. As Kramer, (1987, p. 39) writes for the child: "There are thousands of questions you can ask and answer. ...You might learn something your parents or teachers didn't know. You might even learn something no one else ever knew. That's what makes science exciting."

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Fish

Deep under the sea along the reef of many
kinds and colors of coral the big, fierce fish live
But there are small and gentle fish too, which you and I admire.
They hide in the reef, their stripes and lines and brilliant colors
blending with the coral, these fish of hidden beauty.

— Robert F. Theobald —
Age 8

THE READING ROOM

Welcome to the Reading Room. We hope that this issue's subject will seem less immediate when you read it than when we chose it. The subject is war. In 1986 my book, *Pride of the Peacock*, dealt with a child's fear of nuclear war, and of the dark side of humanity that leads to war. As recently as January, 1990, with Soviet Communism splintering, that book appeared to be fast becoming outdated. War, we could almost begin to hope, was a subject that future American children could read and think about from a safe distance, with the luxury of historical perspective.

But suddenly, after January 16, 1991, our children were again asking frightened, passionately personal questions. For some, fathers or mothers, sisters or brothers, even grandfathers, had been taken away from them to fight. For others, the incessant talk of Scud missiles and chemical weapons posed nightmare fears they scarcely knew how to talk about. The books we will discuss this time focus on children and their questions about our last war, the one it took a decade to begin to face.

Charlie Pippin, by Candy Dawson Boyd, tells the story of one sixth grade black girl's search for answers about why her veteran father seems more and more distant, more and more angry and aggressive. Why, 10 years after the war ended, does he still argue with her uncle, also a veteran, about Vietnam, and why do other family members avoid the subject?

Charlie begins with a team social studies project in which she and her friends learn that wars are being waged many places in the world all the time. They discover that nuclear war, whether begun by Super Powers or smaller countries, is a genuine and continuing threat, and that Vietnam, even after a decade, has not stopped affecting the lives and families of many of the men who fought it. Charlie turns the project into an anti-war speech for a contest, and her views on working for a world of peace put her in direct opposition to her father, who insists that there are reasons for war. Charlie and her father must create peace for themselves—a peace that can rest only on coming to terms with the ravages of war.

The Wall is a picture book by Eve Bunting, illustrated by Ronald Himler. This book is a simple but moving account of a boy's visit to the Vietnam Memorial with his father, to find the name of his grandfather, make a rubbing and leave the boy's picture. The visit helps to show the boy that though the war ended long before his birth, he, too, suffered a great loss.

Park's Quest, by Katherine Paterson, also incorporates the Vietnam Memorial as survivors attempt to come to terms with the effects of the war. Here, though, a name on the black granite monument is only the beginning. Parkington Waddell Broughton the Fifth, age 11, lives a life of the imagination with King Arthur in a time when warfare seems to have incorporated honor and glory. His personification of Arthurian legend leads him first to the Memorial and then on a larger quest for his own holy grail—the warrior father he never knew, who died in Vietnam in 1973.

As quests often do, Park's leads him to more than he had been looking for—to the family that gave him his name, to a father who was man as well as warrior, and to human aspects of war he had never imagined. Unlike the other two books, this one transcends war as "issue" and takes the reader into the complex reality of an individual life. That, of course, is why war is tragedy—because those who engage in it, those who die in it, and those who are forever changed by it are not faceless masses. They are real and complex individual human beings.

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virtually all academic work, Ken had gradually let more and more schoolwork slide. Missing assignments and poor grades were Ken's primary school trademarks.

When Ken entered fifth grade, his mother, a single parent, voiced concern that he may have established such a serious pattern of underachievement in school that he might be in grave academic danger, particularly with the impending change to middle school. School officials recommended that she curtail Ken's numerous extracurricular activities until schoolwork was completed and his overall academic performance increased. Ken's mother obliged with early curfews, temporary removal from organized sports and scouts, and tabling of the science club.

Despite supportive sessions with the school counselor, Ken's performance, as some would have predicted, actually grew worse. He openly admitted that "school was a prison" and that "everything fun was locked in a closet." Ken's teachers and parent continually reminded him that, with some scholastic effort on his part, all of those activities of interest would be quickly restored. However, by the end of the first marking period, Ken was failing **everything**, even subjects in which he had performed to some degree prior to the curtailing of extracurricular activities. Instead of a few missing assignments, Ken had completed virtually nothing in school. As he put it, "school is the only time I get to be with my friends now, so I need to use the time there with them and not doing work."

AN APPROACH

Ken's dilemma is not so uncommon. Although many gifted youngsters experience periods of underachievement, some as severe as in Ken's case, many of them are extremely productive in a wide variety of activities and interests outside of school (Emerick, 1989; Ziv, Rimon, & Doni, 1977). While it is often presumed that this seeming inconsistency between lack of performance in school and lots of performance out of school is caused by the school's failure to account for student interests, frequently the problem runs far deeper than interests alone.

Schools may fail to account for any number of specific social, emotional, and intellectual needs, any of which, if ignored, could trigger a spiral of underachievement (Whitmore, 1988). Because a child's degree of motivation in school is determined largely by the nature of the school personality (both overt and disguised manipulations of the school atmosphere that help students feel they are members of the school and that they belong there) and the nature of the school character (specific components of the curriculum and the instructional methods through which the curriculum is delivered to learners), a problem related to any aspect of the school personality or character could be the root cause for underachievement.

> ***...a problem related to any aspect of the school personality or character could be the root cause for underachievement.***

In Ken's case, the school and his mother quickly realized that their efforts to force Ken to achieve would not be successful. All that had been accomplished was an entrenchment of his underachievement at school and unhappiness at home. In order to investigate the issue, Ken became involved in more frequent counseling sessions outside the school setting. From the start, the psychologist made it clear to Ken that, in exchange for Ken's time spent in counseling, all of the extracurricular activities would be reinstated. Within only one week, Ken was performing at a rate far better than he had been during the curfew period. However, he was still performing far below a level that could be considered even mildly commensurate with his academic ability.

Through discussions, it became clearer that Ken was unsure about school's expectations. In contrast, he felt that his out-of-school activities provided him with very definite expectations for successful involvement. During one session, Ken noted that he "really wasn't ever sure" what his teachers wanted from him. He recalled that, at one point in third grade, he worked diligently to complete an art project in which students were to draw some object using shading and perspective techniques to illustrate depth. Ken drew his house and added great detail, including the covering of the chimney from bottom to top with ivy. Ken vividly recalled that when he received the drawing back, the teacher had questioned where he had "ever seen anything so absurd as ivy all over a chimney." In spite of Ken's attempts to explain that his very own house had such a chimney, the teacher refused to listen. Although Ken felt he had fulfilled the assignment according to the "rules" set by the teacher, he had nonetheless been graded down. In Ken's mind, the lower grade was directly related to his chimney, which he was still quick to defend as being "real."

Ken's recollections included other examples in which he had, according to his perception, accomplished what had been asked of him only to earn marks lower than those he felt he deserved. One other *(Continued on page 9)*

profound example was when he had completed three pages in a math workbook for homework during fourth grade instead of the two page assignment, thinking that doing more would earn him a better grade; unfortunately, Ken was chastised by the teacher for "going ahead." Clearly Ken had come to a point where the school personality was no longer asking him to belong in an academic sense. Thus, at least one possible cause for his underachievement was related to the school's academic expectations: that they were unclear to Ken.

This incongruity between his perceived school expectations and those that actually existed did not necessarily mean that all of the school personality was a problem for Ken. Keep in mind that, at least in a social sense, thanks to his friendships, Ken did feel a very real sense of belonging. Had he not had those relationships established, he might well have extended his underachievement to truancy. The fact that those friendships existed and served to draw Ken to school could become a pathway toward reversing his underachievement.

Ken's early counseling sessions also revealed several other important points related to Ken's expectations, particularly those of his out-of-school activities. He described his scout-related activities in relation to the earning of badges as "a set list of things you have to do to earn each badge." He viewed the expectations of his ice hockey activities in terms of "there's penalties if you don't play fair and the 'ref' is the judge and knows the rules and how to play the game better than anybody, and you practice and do the best you can to help your team win without too many penalties." Similarly, he said of his science club: "You get to stay in it if you do an experiment once a month and have the club be there when you do it, and we all get to see how it works."

Ken, as is characteristic of many gifted children, maintained a high degree of fair play. In his discussion of ice hockey, it was certain that he did not always agree with the determinations of the referee, but because the rules of the game are specifically spelled-out, there was not a lot of room for disagreement, particularly if you had practiced and were trying your best. In considering this issue of fairness in accordance to clear "rules of the game," it seemed more and more likely that Ken's real problem with school achievement may have been connected to the imprecise "ways to play the game." Certainly, in his numerous tales about instances in which he felt he had tried his best (or had even, in his mind, exceeded the "best," as in the workbook example), the common thread was that there were no clear expectations, no certain rules by which the school could measure one's success or failure. Rather, in Ken's mind, virtually every academic decision was subjective and based on an individual teacher's personal set of rules, rules that were unknown to him.

... role playing nearly always focused on an argument between the rational and irrational ideas related to school fairness and expectations...

This realization on the part of the counselor helped establish future directions for sessions with Ken. In considering an array of therapeutic approaches that would deal with Ken's irrational view of school as being totally without rules of fair play, it was decided that role playing would be useful as a means for Ken to begin to view school from other points of view, particularly those of his teachers (Corsini, 1966). It was felt that, over time, role playing would enable Ken to begin to establish a "set of rules" against which to set expectations related to his academic studies. Moreover, there was reason to believe, based on other cases, that role playing would allow Ken a view of his situation that might expose the irrational side of his underachievement in a way that would require Ken himself to identify the irrationality (Little & Kendall, 1979; McMullen, 1986).

The role playing technique was employed with Ken for the remainder of the school year. While role playing nearly always focused on an argument between the rational and irrational ideas related to school fairness and expectations, many variations were employed. In most cases, Ken played the rational part while the therapist acted the irrational one, but occasionally Ken played both parts, alternating between them. As an extremely bright and articulate youngster, Ken enjoyed these verbal opportunities immensely.

Shortly after role playing therapy began, Ken's performance in school showed some signs of improvement in that he was willing to attempt assignments that he previously would have carefully ignored. Only several weeks into role playing, Ken embarked on a required, long-term science project that ultimately he was able to complete. However, progress was slow in that overall school performance did not improve markedly until nearly the end of the school year. By that time, he had succeeded in securing his first "A," pulling his average for that marking period from "F" near the start of the year to "C" by year's end. Although Ken was *(Continued on page 10)*

capable of much more, keep in mind that he had never before performed so well in school. Moreover, as the counseling progressed through the year, Ken had been able to develop a set of "rules" that were shared with and agreed to by his teachers and his mother. They included items associated with mastery learning ("Once I can show I know the stuff, I don't have to keep doing it."), with communication in the classroom ("The teacher will let me know what it is exactly I have to learn and be able to show her I can do."), and with support at home ("My mom will call the teacher to let her know how I'm doing with my homework.").

... role playing offered a safe forum in which to explore a variety of options for ameliorating this problem of underachievement.

Ken continued to make remarkable academic progress through his school career. His counseling sessions were gradually discontinued during the seventh grade because, throughout the sixth grade and into grade seven, his grades were averaging "B" or higher in nearly all subjects. Perhaps more importantly, his interest in science had been nurtured by the increased communication between the home and the school (one of Ken's "rules"), and Ken had succeeded in carrying a straight "A" average in science throughout all of sixth grade and had taken first place in the middle school science fair.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ROLE PLAYING

Role playing's effectiveness as a therapeutic approach can be attributed to its characteristics of spontaneity and the simultaneous heightening of feelings and thinking "in contrived but realistic situations in which people are forced to find new and appropriate solutions" (Corsini, 1966, p. 33). In order to ensure that these characteristics emerge, several guidelines must be observed by the therapist.

First, as with all other forms of psychotherapy, consideration for the environment in which the activity will occur is absolutely essential. In order to ensure a high degree of openness, the role playing activity should take place in a private, comfortable, and relaxed atmosphere that allows for physical movement in the event the therapy evolves beyond a simple verbal exchange. Use of recording devices may be helpful, but care should be taken to maintain the client's trust; if the recorder becomes obtrusive, role playing results will be negatively influenced. In some cases, video recordings can be effective, as they permit the client and therapist opportunities for the immediate review of behaviors as they are seen by others.

Second, the therapist who employs role playing must be highly creative, willing to take risks, and somewhat charismatic. Particularly in the construction of role playing scenarios, delineating the roles involved, and improvising responses, the therapist must always maintain the structure of the role playing activity even if the client has moved in a direction that was not predicted. The therapist, at the very least, must appear to the client to know exactly what is happening and why (Corsini, 1966). Consequently, some degree of "stage presence" on the part of the psychologist is necessary for role playing to be effective, yet good role play therapy allows the client some room for exercising creativity himself. The successful therapist will be in control but not suppressive of the client's behavior.

Finally, the use of role playing requires extremely quick thinking on the part of the therapist. It is a highly active and often unpredictable process, meaning that decisions regarding the way in which the role playing progresses may need to be made on a moment's notice. Moreover, as the role playing is transpiring, analysis of each segment of the activity should take place. This allows for possible clues to emerge that might lead to ideas for new situations that can be explored through future role playing sessions.

CONCLUSION

While role playing is not magical, it probably is an underused technique with gifted children who are underachieving in school. Although not all gifted children are interested in verbal exchange with adults whom they have come to trust, many are so inclined. Further, because many underachieving gifted students are active outside of school in both organized and semi-organized activities and are largely achieving in those, it makes sense that some link can be established between those successful experiences and school. For Ken, it was the incongruity between imprecise expectations and "rules of the game" at school and those in his extracurricular life. Once that incongruity was discovered, role playing offered a safe forum in which to explore a variety of options for ameliorating this problem of underachievement.

There is every reason to believe that the role playing technique, used on a transitory basis, could have broader applications beyond therapy. Although the technique should only be employed under the close supervision of a trained

(Continued on page 11)

All of these factors clearly indicate the importance of counseling services for gifted students. However, elementary counselors are a rarity, and the enormous case loads of middle and high school counselors force them to focus on students with the most pressing needs. This crisis orientation leads to the neglect of the gifted, whose needs are not particularly obvious. Our society seems to adhere to the philosophy, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." But a broken child, a broken spirit, is hard to mend, and the alarming number of suicides among high achieving adolescents should alert us to the fact that for some of our youth, intervention may come too late.

We need a new proactive conception of counseling that recognizes the needs of the child before crises arise. And, as the new often emerges from the old, the framework for such a conception was actually given to the field over half a century ago in the visionary work of Leta Stetter Hollingworth.

EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

Dr. Hollingworth, the first counselor of the gifted (Kerr, 1990), recommended that the gifted receive "emotional education" (1939, p. 585) to help them deal with the special problems that beset them in elementary school. The purpose of emotional education was to prevent maladjustment and to enable the children to develop their potential more fully. It was a comprehensive program for social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.

One of the major components of Hollingworth's plan was an appropriate academic curriculum, sufficiently challenging so that the children enjoyed learning and were motivated to work hard. At first blush, this may not appear "emotional," but Hollingworth recognized the relationship between "hard and interesting work" (1939, p. 585) and the emotional development of the gifted throughout the lifespan. Terman and Oden (1947) reported that gifted males who did not find interesting, fulfilling work in their adult lives had higher mortality rates than their more actualized counterparts.

Another component was placement with "like-minded" peers to prevent social isolation. Hollingworth observed that the play interests of gifted children are fundamentally different from those of their agemates. They engage in more organized, goal oriented activities, with complex rules. They gravitate toward older playmates, preferring to "play with others of *like mental age*" (1926, p. 136). Social alienation has always been a hazard for the highly gifted, but it need not occur; it can be avoided by finding other children with similar abilities and interests.

A third facet of emotional education was teaching the children how to handle the apparent foolishness of others with patience and love. This is not accomplished by grouping all types of children together and pretending differences don't exist. On the contrary, Hollingworth felt that tolerance could only be developed when the gifted come to grips with the *differences* between themselves and others in thought processes, interests and values.

This is one of the most painful and difficult lessons that each gifted child must learn... It is more necessary that this be learned than that any school subject be mastered. Failure to learn how to tolerate in a reasonable fashion the foolishness of others leads to bitterness, disillusionment, and misanthropy. (Hollingworth, 1942, pp. 259-260)

In answer to the question, "But how will they learn to get along in the real world?" we can only learn to love others when we have achieved *(Continued on page 12)*

WEARING THEIR SHOES: Reversing Underachievement
Continued from page 10

professional, with training and practice in role playing, it seems appropriate that teachers of the gifted could utilize the technique by imbedding it in their curricula as a means for exploring underachievement among their most frustrating students.

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self-love. The process involves the following steps: (1) self-awareness; (2) finding kindred spirits; (3) feeling understood and accepted by others; (4) self-acceptance; (5) recognition of the differences in others; and, eventually, (6) the development of patience and understanding of others.

Leta Hollingworth initiated the study of biography for the gifted and taught this subject herself in her experimental programs. She felt that these children need role models to learn how others like themselves had adjusted, sustained effort against odds, and contributed to civilization. Biographies also serve to inform children about how careers are made and the various kinds of intellectual work needed in the world. Through these role models, Hollingworth encouraged the students to set high ideals, perfect their work, learn self-discipline, and strive toward altruism and service to society.

...gifted students have different issues from their agemates, and they will not reveal their true concerns in a mixed ability group.

Hollingworth noted that children begin to ask existential questions when they reach the *mental age* of 12 or 13 years, which, for some children, can occur as young as 6 or 7. At this stage of development, they become interested in origins and destinies and in developing a systematic philosophy of life. Their questions and concerns were used as the basis of Hollingworth's student-centered curriculum and child-centered therapy. She believed that the gifted need an interdisciplinary, thematic curriculum that provides them with a thorough understanding of history and philosophy, awareness of the interdependence of the global community, opportunities for innovation and a sense of the role they can play in shaping the future.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Hollingworth's emotional curriculum was her training the children in the fine art of argumentation. She realized that the highly gifted are very argumentative by nature so she offered them a special program in disputation, which included "argument with oneself," "argument with others in private, involving etiquette and the art of polite disagreement" and "argument in public" (Hollingworth, 1939, p. 585). This part of Hollingworth's curriculum, at the very least, should be resurrected in gifted programs.

COUNSELING GROUPS

The inclusion of affective development in elementary programs for the gifted dates back to the germinal work of Leta Hollingworth. But, traditionally, at the middle and high school levels, the strong emphasis on mastery of specific subject areas has left little room in the curriculum for emotional development. However, some innovative districts have instituted counseling seminars for middle and high school gifted students and these programs have been very effective.

The Aurora Public Schools in Colorado, for example, developed a comprehensive affective curriculum for middle school gifted students under the direction of Dr. Suzanne Perry, a regular columnist for *Understanding Our Gifted*. The curriculum concentrated on the following topics:

- *Understanding Giftedness*
- *Self-Expectations*
- *Dealing with Expectations of Others*
- *Feeling Different*
- *Peer Pressure*
- *Sensitivity*
- *Tolerance*
- *Family Structure*
- *Responsibility for Others*
- *Career Exploration*
- *Leadership Training*

(Beville, 1983)

Topics such as these are generic concerns of gifted students and lead to lively discussions in which students share their experiences and give each other suggestions for coping with similar problems. The Aurora affective development program incorporated similations and structured group activities, and was conducted by the teacher of the gifted. Suzanne Perry (1985) also created a book entitled, *Giftedness: Living with It and Liking It*, which was field tested with students in this program. The book is an entire unit on understanding giftedness; it includes the following sections:

- *"What is it and who's got it?"*
- *"How do you get it?"*
- *"Identifying it."*
- *"It and other people."*
- *"It and you."*
- *"Misuses and abuses of it."*
- *"Doing something with it."*
- *"Living with it and liking it."*

Dr. James Delisle (1980), another of our regular columnists, designed a set of activities for preventive counseling, with discussion questions, books, films, cartoons, brainstorming suggestions, and quotations. Here is a sample:

- *Communicate a series of goals that you expect to achieve and a series of goals that others expect you to achieve:*
- *compare these expectations:*
- *rate the financial, societal, and emotional benefits of each expectation. (p. 24)*

(Continued on page 13)

Delisle's article includes an instrument for evaluating the success of a preventive counseling program.

A counseling group can also be more open-ended rather than topical in nature. This format may work best under the guidance of a trained counselor. The students take turn sharing issues of immediate concern in their lives and gaining assistance from group members. The sessions usually begin with a question such as, "Who has an issue you would like to share with the group today?" The counselor needs some training in group processes to draw in different members of the group, note levels of discomfort that might be expressed nonverbally, and move the group along at a productive pace. Role-playing can be used in a group setting to facilitate awareness of other points of view, conflict resolution and to practice negotiation skills.

In some communities, it has been suggested that if a counseling group is good for gifted students, it would be good for all students. However, gifted students have different issues from their agemates, and they will not reveal their true concerns in a mixed ability group. Preventive counseling will only be effective if the student feels safe; the problems experienced by the gifted are often related to their lack of emotional safety in a heterogeneous group. Gifted students have many devices for hiding their abilities so that they are not teased by the others. This is a serious issue that leads to inauthenticity and inner conflict for the student. But the issue would not come up or be resolved in a heterogeneous group. It is much more likely that a group of students who are all hiding to some degree will be able to encourage each other to find better ways of coping with their differences.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY COUNSELING

The gifted student who makes statements such as, "I wish I were dead," should be enrolled in individual counseling, whether or not it is supplied by the school. It is unwise to assume that these are "just attention getting behaviors." All such cries for help need to be taken seriously. Some additional signs that individual counseling is needed include:

- *intense competitiveness*
- *social isolation*
- *alienation within the family*
- *inability to control anger*
- *excessive manipulativeness*
- *chronic underachievement*
- *depression or continual boredom*
- *sexual acting out*
- *evidence of any kind of abuse*
- *recent traumatic experiences or loss of loved ones*

Children under the age of 10 often profit from play therapy in which they have a chance to act out their frustrations and inner conflicts with puppets, dolls, and toys while they engage in conversation about their feelings and actions with the therapist. Older students prefer a more adult-like talking therapy. In any event, the counselor or therapist should be thoroughly experienced in working with gifted children and youth. Otherwise, some of the symptoms of giftedness might be misinterpreted or the child may manipulate the therapist.

Individual counseling may also be sought by adolescents and adults as part of their plan for self development. Counseling can assist youths in selecting careers, preparing for marriage, gaining greater self-awareness, learning conflict resolution skills, dealing with existential issues, developing independence, and actualizing their potential. Family counseling can increase harmony in the family system and enable each member to understand each other's personality types and roles. Counseling should be viewed in a positive light and sought for prevention rather than just remediation. Emotional development is as important as cognitive development and needs to be a goal of educating the gifted. A preventive counseling program can teach students how to be aware of the signs of trouble in their friends and effective methods of gaining assistance. It can help students learn methods of reducing stress, establish positive relations with peers, develop leadership skills, and make appropriate career choices. World concerns can be discussed along with action plans for making a difference. If we really desire our gifted children to actualize their potential, we need to help them develop their inner lives, not just their skills in the work force.

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Linda Silverman, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and Director of the Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, Colorado.

Kathi Kearney

THE HIGHLY GIFTED

Highly Gifted Children and the Press Part I

Susan, at age 10, was a full-time college student. Unfortunately, she was also subject to the compulsory attendance law, which required her family to apply to the local school board for an "equivalent instruction" program. Since Susan had been homeschooled the previous year, the school board insisted she take a fourth-grade achievement test to "prove" she was learning. When her parents refused, the reporter covering the school board meeting that night filed the story with the local newspaper. The next morning's headlines screamed, "Genius Child is Denied Home Teaching." That was bad enough, but that was not all. That morning, an Associated Press reporter called the family "just to confirm the details" of the story. Two days later, an Associated Press article made the front page of the state's dailies. Then, Susan's family received calls from ***The Today Show***, ***People Magazine***, *and* ***Johnny Carson***. *They refused these and all further interviews, but that did not prevent them from receiving calls from reporters for a full year after the local story was first published.*

Extraordinary children occasionally receive extraordinary attention. Magazines, newspapers, radio, and television have portrayed the plight of highly gifted children in various ways since the turn of the century. From the vicious press attacks on celebrated child prodigy, William James Sidis, in the century's early decades to "Doogie Howser, M.D.," ABC television's sensitive and well-written weekly series about a highly gifted 17-year-old doctor, both press coverage and dramatic portrayals of this population reflect the consistent ambivalence Americans feel toward highly gifted children.

The 9-year-old college student, the 14-year-old published novelist, and the 6-year-old composer are bound to draw at least some attention to their unusual accomplishments. Though they are fascinating to the public, such accomplishments also can make some people uncomfortable—uncomfortable, perhaps, with how they have developed their own abilities; uncomfortable because there is nothing in their own experience to explain such a phenomenon; and uncomfortable because these children often have not used the conventional routes to their achievements: conformity to the status quo is not the way a 9-year-old ends up in college. Historical tensions in American society between excellence and equality introduce political and sociological issues as well. Thus, the public reaction to the 9-year-old's college placement is more likely to be "I'm certainly glad I don't have your problems, Mrs. Grost. These children always turn out to be unproductive failures..." (Grost, 1970, p. 136) than it is "How nice, Mrs. Smith, that your daughter is enjoying her new school."

We live in a media-saturated environment. If highly gifted children are going to be featured in television documentaries, on the pages of *Life* magazine, and in the scripts of a major television network series—and they are—it is extremely important that reporters and scriptwriters have access to information that will help them understand the unique needs of these children. It is also imperative that parents, teachers, and the children themselves share a rudimentary understanding of how the press works, and realize that they ***always*** have the right to say "no" to a reporter. Balancing these two considerations is often a conflicting task. When should a child be allowed publicity, and when should he or she be protected from the press? What are the long-term consequences of early press coverage for a highly gifted child? What if those families and professionals who are concerned about portraying an accurate picture of extraordinarily gifted children *don't* talk to the press? Will others who have less information and less concern about the welfare of these children do so instead?

These questions have no easy answers; the right decision for one child and family may be a devastating decision for another. Both individual and family developmental patterns need to be considered very carefully, and even then the best choice is often to say "no." Publicity, like the contents of Pandora's box once it has been opened, cannot be recalled. However, the families of many highly gifted children and child prodigies often discover that they must deal with the press at some point. The next column will present specific information and guidelines for families contemplating press coverage.

See page 15 for an annotated reading list on gifted children and the press.

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Kathi Kearney is Founder of the Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children in Auburn, Maine, and is a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Annotated Reading
Gifted Children and the Press
By: Kathi Kearney

The following books about highly gifted children and their families discuss both positive and negative experiences with press coverage.

- Wallace, A. (1986). *The prodigy: A biography of William James Sidis, America's oldest child prodigy.* New York: E.P. Dutton.
  This book details the difficult life of William James Sidis, and includes an extensive discussion of the negative role of the press. Included are excerpts from newspaper and magazine accounts.
- Feldman, R.D. (1982). *Whatever happened to the Quiz Kids?* Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press.
  "Little Ruthie Duskin" was one of the famous radio "Quiz Kids" during the 1940s. In adulthood, she wondered what had become of her highly gifted cohorts. This book outlines her search for the rest of the "Quiz Kids," the story of their lives and achievements 40 years later, and the impact of early publicity on their later lives.
- Grost, A. (1970). *Genius in residence.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
  This is a mother's story of raising Michael, a math prodigy who went to college at the age of 9. Mrs. Grost provides a humorous and realistic view of what it was like to be stuck in the middle of massive press coverage about her highly gifted child.

The Hidden Gifted Learner
(Continued from page 4)

were made, Mrs. Fairfield may err on the side of not attuning keenly enough to the complexities of Elliot's particular cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The question is, of course, where is Elliot in all of this? How do we determine what Elliot needs, given all of these different "takes" on giftedness?

Determining the best plan for any gifted child is a complicated juggling act involving the child's physical capabilities, social strengths and weaknesses, and academic needs at a particular point in time. A decision made today is good for today. It does not predict what might be right tomorrow for the same child. Furthermore, changing the plan tomorrow does not negate the rightness of it for today. Educational planning for a gifted child is somewhat like navigating a ship through choppy waters. Constant ongoing monitoring of the ship's progress and location is a part of the process; and flexibility is required so that at any time, alterations can be made to keep the ship "on course."

One constant consideration which needs to be factored in is the question, "Who is this child and what are his or her particular strengths, needs and desires?" For us adults involved in decision-making, an important part of finding "the hidden gifted child" is examining the experiences we bring to the discussion table which create the danger of our overemphasizing particular aspects of the giftedness equation while inappropriately giving other aspects inadequate consideration.

Martha Morelock is a doctoral candidate in Child Study at the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Study, Tufts University.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL: *A Journal on Adult Giftedness*

Gifted children usually have gifted parents. If you are wondering about your own giftedness, subscribe to **Advanced Development: *A Journal on Adult Giftedness***. No other journal focuses specifically on gifted adults. Unlike the traditional view of adult giftedness as high levels of productivity and creativity, advanced development in adults is defined as the deepening of the personality and strengthening of human values such as empathy, concern for others, responsibility and integrity.

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PERSONALITY PLUS

Sensitivity

The gifted are by nature emotionally sensitive. In our studies at the Gifted Child Development Center, we have found that this characteristic appears in the first few years of life and remains with the individual throughout life. In several separate studies, sensitivity was the most frequently mentioned characteristic by parents when they were asked to describe the personalities of their children (Silverman, 1983). Here are some examples from our parent questionnaires.

J (age 4) is a very sensitive person. He gets his feelings hurt easily and doesn't like to hurt others' feelings.

C (age 6) is a very intense little girl. When she's happy everyone around her radiates happiness. When she's miserable, her surroundings are tense and uneasy. She is extremely sensitive and has high expectations of herself.

A (age 7 1/2) is extremely perceptive and tuned in to people and their feelings.

M (age 3 yrs. 9 mo.) is a very loving and compassionate child. He cannot stand to hear a baby crying. He puts his hands over his ears if he hears anything too loud or too violent. His feelings are hurt in an instant. He is concerned about the welfare of others; very giving.

Dabrowski's Theory, which I mentioned in my last column, provides a theoretical framework for understanding the sensitivity of gifted individuals. It is one facet of the "emotional overexcitability" which is the innate equipment of this population (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977). As the foundation for compassion, sensitivity is a positive trait. Its opposite is "insensitivity," which is certainly not a goal for our children. The development of higher level humanitarian values in adult life depends upon this characteristic in childhood. Therefore, we need to provide environments in which emotional sensitivity can be nurtured and supported.

Every gifted child needs a safe place to cry. The home, the gifted class, the counselor's office, the principal's office, should all be havens where gifted children can express the depth of their feelings. Boys learn early in life that it is dangerous to show their emotions on the playground or in the regular classroom. If they bury or deny their feelings, their intellects will grow while their emotional development remains stunted. Bright children can adopt different codes of behavior in different situations, and, as long as there is an outlet for emotional expression somewhere in their lives, they can learn to differentiate where it is safe from where it is no

Special classes for the gifted may be needed more for children's emotional development than for their cognitive development. Here, the children can find others with similar sensitivities and values. Discipline is often less of a problem in these classes because the students can verbalize their feelings and use their reasoning skills to solve problems rather than resort to aggression. Many gifted children abhor violence in any form—even slapstick cartoons.

Sensitivity is a precious commodity. If it is abused, it can lead to a warped and distorted personality that lashes out in pain. If it is allowed to develop fully, it results in altruism and a desire to be of service to humanity. Let us guard the sensitivity of our gifted children.

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Linda Silverman, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and Director of the Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, Colorado.

LIFE

The rivers are as clear as a shedded tear.

A little boy cries

A big man tries

To wipe away his tears.

— Andrea Mancini —
Age 8

IN SEARCH OF SERENDIPITY

Creative Ventures And Encounters

Jerry Flack
Tour Guide

For this journey, you only have to spend 25 cents and travel as far as the nearest newspaper box. The newspaper is a remarkably versatile tool which may be creatively used with gifted students of nearly any age for any occasion. Learning about the newspaper need not stop with mastery of the newspaper reporter's 5 W's (Who? What? When? Where? Why?). The newspaper may be creatively employed as a useful adjunct counseling tool by parents, teachers, and counselors who want to help gifted students, individually and collectively, explore personal feelings. Indeed, you may even choose to begin this journey by practicing these ideas yourself before introducing them to your gifted students.

Tomorrow's headline and lead news story will be about YOU! What's great about you? What is your neatest victory or most stunning accomplishment? Why are you the focus of the lead news story in the *New York Times* or *The Denver Post*? Create the headline and the lead news story that tell your story.

Examine the lyrics of a popular song that deals with emotional needs and contemporary problems. Now write a creative letter to Ann Landers or Dear Abby on behalf of the person with the problem. What advice does Ann or Abby return?

Interpersonal activities are a vital part of life, but creative people need periods of solitude, too. Use the classified and display advertisements found in the newspaper to design and furnish your ideal retreat—be it a tree house, a den, or a library.

Tired of witnessing the high level of competition between gifted students? Here is a fun and productive cooperative learning activity. Place students in teams of four and ask them to work cooperatively to build a geodesic dome from newspapers. Challenge the students to build a dome strong enough to safely support the weight of at least one group member, or to build a dome large enough so that all team members can comfortably sit under it. Please note: This is also a fun family activity!

- Using both pictures and words, create a display advertisement for the newspaper that sells your best features. *What is neat about you?*
- Be creative. Be flexible. Stretch yourself. Read a section of the newspaper you usually ignore. Then make a list of five new things you learned today from reading the business pages, the so-called "women's pages," or the sports pages.
- Write a classified advertisement that states one of the main problems or chief gripes gifted kids have. For example, might your ad read:
  Wanted: More challenging math assignments.
- Find stories about people in the news who exhibit personal courage, persistence, or perseverance. Begin a scrapbook or classroom bulletin board about these people.

Don't be afraid to be silly. Right now, stop reading, grab a newspaper and make yourself a sailor's hat from today's newspaper. How creative can you be? Hurry up. You need your hat. We're about to start another journey. ***Bon voyage!***

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and editor of *G/T News*.

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ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

A devastating forest fire destroyed a house in my neighborhood. Each day, I drove past the contorted foundation and searched vainly for the herd of deer that often grazed in the yard. And then one morning as I approached, the road was crammed with trucks and equipment and people — the community had banded together to rebuild that home. Within a very short time the house again existed, the family moved back, and I watched hopefully for the return of the deer.

What does this have to do with education—and particularly gifted education? Programs with substance and meaning, programs which make a difference in children's lives, have been developed and refined over a period of years; and many of these programs have been eliminated—destroyed—with the suddenness and finality of a raging fire.

According to Linda Silverman:

Throughout the United States, budgets for gifted education have been slashed, self-contained classes and pull-out programs have been eliminated, teacher certification has been lost, gifted coordinators have been demoted to regular classroom positions, state consultants have been harrassed and forced out...teachers who support gifted education dare not speak for fear of losing their jobs, administrators find it politically untenable to continue supporting provisions for the gifted, and parents are bewildered by this sudden change of heart. (Silverman, 1990, p. 1-2)

We—parents, teachers, administrators, business leaders—are the community that must band together to rebuild when programs for gifted and talented youngsters are suddenly and irrationally wiped out. Silverman cautions, "Gifted education is on the verge of extinction in the United States unless something is done immediately to counter the trend." (p. 2)

1. *Individual programs fail to use general data available from studies of the gifted.*
2. *Each program has gone in its own direction without evaluating previous educational effort.*
3. *Programs tend to concentrate on one aspect of education, usually the academic—or sometimes one aspect of the academic.*
4. *Most adaptations are quantitative, causing gifted students to cover more subject matter rather than different subject matter or the same subject matter by a different method.*
5. *The programs have been piecemeal with little continuity or transferability from community to community or even from grade to grade in the same community.*
(Freehill, 1961, p. 192)

The above five points sound relevant to our struggle in gifted education today. It may surprise you to know that they are quoted from a book written 30 years ago. The paragraph preceding these five points may be even more surprising:

"While there is a revitalized interest in the education of the gifted it appears that current planning faces many of the problems which were pointed out in 1939 by a national committee on evaluation of education of the gifted. . . " (Freehill, 1961, p. 192, emphasis added)

Although we have worked long and tirelessly to develop programs for gifted children, the results are tenuous. The fires continue to rage and threaten the edifices we build for gifted and talented youngsters. But the future of humankind depends on the leadership of our most outstanding students, and we must replan and rebuild as often as we need to. Our combined efforts can ward off annihilation. Gifted education will forge ahead; something substantial will again emerge from the ashes.

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Dorothy Knopper is a Private Consultant on the Gifted in Colorado and "Open Space" columnist for *Roeper Review.*

Lisa Ferguson

from parent to parent

The extreme sensitivity of some gifted children provides special challenges for parents.

"I think it's hard to be a child and be different from everybody else. Even a very verbal boy, who may say that it's ok for him to be pensive and artistic, can't always make his behavior agree with his expressed sentiment."

Jane Barnes, parent of 4 highly gifted children, finds their sensitivity overwhelming at times. "It's hard to help the kids to keep it in perspective." She jokes that Mom needs counseling after trying to interpret a confusing and contradictory world to each child in a way that is sensitive to their age and personality.

Jane feels that whether a child is male or female is less of a factor than the unique perspective each child has and his or her level of development.

"I don't see big differences between the girls and the boys when they're functioning as a family."

On the other hand, Jane sees major differences between the children's individual approaches to life and learning, and wonders how educators can approach groups of children as similar when each child is so remarkably different to the people who know them best?

The war in the Persian Gulf had a dramatic effect on the Barnes children. It brought out intense anguish.

"We had a week of awful behavior. The children were mad at each other and mad at the world. They were afraid and they acted out because of it. They were not convinced that the war was that far away from them."

Andrew (10 years old) can see many other possible solutions, and imagine many other possible endings to the crisis.

"Andrew doesn't do well on multiple choice tests. He has trouble understanding how there can be only one answer to a question. And he understands if/then sequences very well. He's frightened because he knows that every *if* you change means a change in *then*."

The contradictions between what adults teach and what adults do was very alarming.

"Allison (7 years old) ran away at one point. When I brought her back she cried and cried and said she just didn't understand. How come she had to 'work out' her differences with people? How come children aren't allowed to hit each other, but men can kill each other?"

Lisa Ferguson is from Haverill, Massachusetts and the parent of highly gifted children.

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ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT

Volume 3 of ***Advanced Development***, the first journal on adult giftedness, is now available. In keeping with the philosophy of *Understanding Our Gifted*, this companion volume focuses on inner development rather than achievement. The theme of this issue is "The Possible Human," and the featured theorist is Jean Houston. Etty Hillesum's story, the moral exemplar, describes the attainment of inner peace during the holocaust. ***Don't miss this issue!*** Subscription rate is currently $15 for individuals or institutions. ***See order form on page 15.***

AEGUS: Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students

April 12-13, 1991. AEGUS presents its fourth annual conference—High Potential at Risk: Gifted Children with Special Needs. University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. For more information, contact Susan Levey, AEGUS, P.O. Box 359, Bedford Hills, NY 10507.

Structure-of-Intellect (SOI) Training Seminars

Basic training seminars on the SOI will be held in L.A. on April 25-26 and in Vida, OR on April 18-19 and June 20-21. Intermediate training is offered in Vida on June 25-26. Advanced training will be held in Vida on June 27-28 and in Holland on July 26-27. For more information, contact Dr. Mary Meeker, SOI Systems, 45755 Goodpasture Road, Vida Oregon 97488. (503) 896-3936.

Dabrowski's Theory of Emotional Development and Its Implications for Giftedness

June 26-30, 1991. This second annual 5-day intensive workshop will be held at Ashland University in Ohio. Dabrowski's theory emphasizes the role of inner conflict in personality transformation. Learn about "overexcitabilities" and levels of emotional development in gifted and creative individuals. Instructors: Dr. Michael Piechowski, Dr. Linda Silverman, Dr. R. Frank Falk and Dr. Nancy Miller. For information, contact Dr. Jane Piirto, Ashland University, Ashland, OH 44805. (419) 289-5379.

Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. will sponsor the Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Holland, from July 29-August 2, 1991. English will be the official conference language. For more information, contact the North American Conference Representative: Richard E. Lange, 834 Inverrary Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015. (708) 537-6029.

FOCUS:

ARTS AND THE GIFTED

ARTS, TALENTS AND GIFTS
Kenneth R. Seeley

DRAWING: A Visual Approach To Learning
Jeanie Goertz

Giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences.
— Annemarie Roeper —

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May - June, 1991

Volume 3, Issue 5

Arts, Talents and Gifts

Kenneth R. Seeley, Ed.D.

The Arts for Whom?

The relationship of the arts to the education of the gifted is very analogous to the relationship of gifted education to general education. We hear the same kind of statements, "I wish we could afford to do more"; "It is not the role of the program to provide that kind of enrichment"; "It is elitist"; "Parents should provide that kind of extra instruction"; and so on. Indeed, the arts have received short shrift by both regular education and gifted education. There is usually some lip service paid to the value of the arts, but there never seems to be time or money to make anything happen. It is clearly an uphill battle, but one that is worth fighting, especially for the gifted.

Mussorgsky once said that "Art is not a means in itself, but a means of addressing humanity."[1] The arts offer this unique blend of the intellectual and emotional in human communication for both creator and audience for the creation. It offers gifted children an opportunity to be a maker of art and a knowledgeable and sensitive consumer of *(Continued on page 9)*

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Arts and the Gifted

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Drawing: A Visual Approach to Learning

Jeanie Goertz, Ed.D.

Specialized thinking that equates drawing with art keeps many people, including many curriculum planners for gifted programs, from realizing that visual education need not be education for a life in drawing. Drawing is representational—that is, it is supposed to look like something. However, drawing can go beyond forms of expression to forms that serve as thinking tools. As a thinking tool drawing requires little or no artistic skill. For the gifted learner, drawing can serve as a visual learning process to improve creativity and accomplishments. Thomas Edison used the process of drawing to help him create and better understand his many inventions. Visual thinking translated into drawing is then not the exclusive reserve of artists. As Rudolf Arnheim (1969) observes:

> *Visual thinking is constantly used by everybody. Surgeons think visually to perform an operation; chemists to construct molecular models; and architects, to create functional buildings with beauty.*

(Continued on page 11)

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

We have chosen a particularly important topic for this issue: "Arts and the Gifted." The vanishing fine arts programs in our schools is a tragedy for all children, and may be even a greater loss to gifted students, whose aesthetic awareness is more advanced and who might have talents that go undeveloped. Giftedness and the arts are interrelated in many respects. One type of giftedness recognized in federal and state legislation is ability in the visual and performing arts. The group with these abilities was once labeled, "talented," which is why most of the programs today bear the name, "gifted and talented."

It is imperative for us to preserve arts in the schools to meet the needs of both the "g" and the "t" in gifted programs. Intellectually gifted children need the emotional, aesthetic and cultural experiences provided by the fine arts. Since they are often the consumers of art in their adult lives, they need to be educated to understand it more fully. (See Jim Delisle's column.) The emphasis on artistic development also enables greater participation in the gifted/talented program of children from all socio-economic strata, all cultural groups, and underachievers. These children may show special talents in the arts even if they have not had the opportunity to achieve within an academic sphere.

Just as all children need physical education while few become athletes, all children need exposure to the arts, but few become artists. Special opportunities need to be provided for those children who have talent in any branch of the fine arts: drama, dance, voice, drawing, playing musical instruments, composing, conducting, etc.. It is only through rigorous training and opportunities to work with other talented students that these talents develop.

In this issue, Ken Seeley gives us a rationale for arts in the schools and some excellent advice for teachers and parents. Jeanie Goertz (now Dr. Goertz as of April 29th—congratulations, Jeanie!) shares ideas about visual thinking for gifted students. And Annette Stock, psychologist and music teacher, offers tips to music educators about teaching music to intellectually gifted students. Our theme is interwoven throughout many of the columns as well.

We hope that you are enjoying *Understanding Our Gifted* and that you will let us know other ways our newsletter can serve you. Please drop us a line. Thanks for sharing our publication with your friends and colleagues. We owe our growth to your support.

Linda Silverman

Understanding Our Gifted

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James R. Delisle

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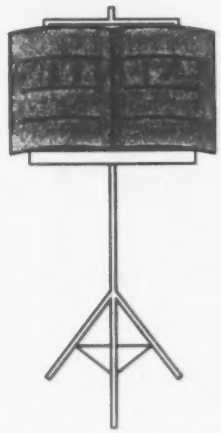

Portrait of a Non-Artist

Beginning in first grade, my weekly art lesson went something like this: Nancy, our school's most talented artist, was given a picture by the teacher. Nancy drew as close a reproduction as possible on the blackboard, using the colored chalk taken out expressly for this special occasion. We, in turn, were to use our crayons and reproduce *her* reproduction as best we could. Grades were given on how accurately our artistic portrayal matched that of Nancy's.

I hated art class.

In music, Marcia played the piano (very well, I might add) while John's angelic voice led us in a chorus of whatever song for which the teacher had sheet music and available lyrics. This continued until 8th grade, when John's voice deepened, and we sang along, instead, to records. I don't recall how I got graded.

I hated music class.

Today, when I walk into a museum, I still have trouble detecting a Monet from a Renoir; at a symphony, I can't tell a fugue from a movement (isn't one part of the other?) without consulting my concert program.

Now, I love art and music, but like a child who enjoys magic while having no knowledge of legerdemain, I listen, or look, in ignorance. I know what I like, but I have no knowledge to compare it against that which I don't.

Elliott Eisner, one of our world's most poetic writers, artists and educators, is concerned that our nation prizes SAT scores above aesthetic awareness, and Lorin Hollander, a pianist who played Carnegie Hall before his tenth birthday, bemoans the fact that every society but our own has made it a priority to teach children about cultures—their own and those in past centuries—as a way to introduce young people to the connections we all share.

To me, functional illiteracy means more than being unable to read; it means, too, that some of us (myself included) are incapable of appreciating the true beauty of sculpture, classical music or ballet, because early on we learned that what Nancy did was "art," and what I did was "not art." Marcia could play the piano and John could sing, but I could do neither. As a child, I hated "the arts," and as most of us will, I distanced myself from those activities that caused me to look silly or unaccomplished. I ridiculed boys like John by calling them sissies, and I rolled my eyes at Nancy, thinking "teacher's pet, teacher's pet" every time she picked up a log of chalk.

My background in the arts, my illiteracy, is shared by too many of my generation. Collectively, we learned long ago to avoid that which we did not understand or appreciate. Now, as adults, we have learned compensatory strategies—we hold our applause at concerts, until we hear others clap, lest we appear uncultured by acknowledging excellence at the wrong time; we roll our eyes at the "guys in tights," knowing secretly that a ballet dancers athletic skills and strength far surpass our own.

I recall vividly art class in second grade, despite years of telling myself that the teacher was naive and her lessons contrived. How I wish, though, that my memories of art class were fond ones, instead of recollections grounded in fear and shame.

Elliott Eisner is right, and so is Lorin Hollander. We must convince our nation, our children and ourselves that "the basics" in life go far beyond basal texts and ditto sheets. For once those reading and writing skills are mastered, we need something onto which they can be attached, like a musical score, a lyric poem or a painting by Monet (or is it Renoir?).

Jim Delisle is Associate Professor of Gifted Child Education at Kent State University in Ohio, and the author of several books, including *Kidstories: Biographies of Twenty Young People You'd Like To Know* (Free Spirit Press).

PARENTING

The Art of Coping with Normalcy

"Is Your Child a Nerd?" was the headline of the cover story, "Children on the Outside Looking In" for *L.A. Parent Magazine*, February, 1991. The accompanying cover photo offensively depicts a stereotyped gifted child: owlish glasses, defiant expression, slouched body, disheveled hair, pens stuffed in shirt pocket, tacky oversized necktie.... The article offers characteristics and some advice for parents of gifted children. No wonder some parents want to protect their children from being labeled "gifted"! "Normal" is the ideal.

Our country's reverence for the normal is affirmed in this (true) college admission recommendation: "In the three years that I have served as counselor for Amanda, I have been most impressed with her maturity, her sense of judgement, and ability to respond to setbacks. Amanda's mother is a psychologist and is very interested in the gifted. I mention this because I believe the mother treats Amanda as a gifted child. She may or may not be, but she handles herself as a normal, well-adjusted high school student... Of all the seniors that I have... I would have to say that Amanda is the most mature acting, most responsible, and the most dependable. I highly recommend... etc." Could it be that Amanda would not feel "normal" enough to endure being different if her family hadn't helped her accept and understand her personal qualities?

Sometimes it seems that being fun and frivolous excludes being gifted. To illustrate: A few weeks into the semester, vibrant, pretty Dione's calculus teacher told her, "I'm really surprised how well you're doing in here. When you walked in, I thought you were one of those blond cheerleader types." Her response: "I am a cheerleader!" How pervasive is the thought that beauty (brawn?) and brains cannot mix?

Parents have a range of reactions to identifying their child as gifted. They worry that the gifted label will do more harm than good: "If you don't label him gifted, then he may still have a chance to be normal." Parents are awed by the concept of giftedness and intimidated that more will be required from them—that the job of parenting suddenly becomes more serious. And they grieve for the loss of their normal child.

Designating a child "gifted" does not cause harm. It is how and why we use "gifted." If it implies, "You could do better," or that the child is our most valuable natural resource to facilitate our own priorities, then it could be destructive. If it helps to explain differences in sensitivity, awareness, and ability, then it can be a scaffold for encouraging children to develop their distinct traits.

An important study of 184 gifted adolescents helps us understand how children respond to being identified as gifted: 91% of these students acknowledged their particular abilities and accepted that the label was correct. Whether they are defined as gifted or not, they know that they are different. When students rated the overall effect of giftedness on their self, 79% considered it as positive, 19% as neutral, and 2% as negative. This study also showed that our children are aware of how "normal" is defended: only 5% of the students regarded the overall effect of their giftedness on others as positive, 52% viewed it as neutral, and 43% as negative (Kerr, Colangelo, & Gaeth, 1988).

As parents, you need to trust your own perceptions of your child's needs and strengths—not other people's ideas of "common sense." (Everybody knows that if the kid is smart you give him more work!) One father reflected, "I can't see making my son miserable just to make everybody else happy."

Our children are different. There may be times when they are sustained by accepting that they are gifted. Maybe we want our children to be a paradox. Sara, age 17, reflected, "They want us to be abnormally brilliant and brilliantly normal."

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Elizabeth Meckstroth is a therapist and consultant in Evanston, Illinois and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child.*

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Karen C. Nelson

Qualitatively Differentiated Learning: The Art of Writing

In order to be defensible, gifted education must provide learning experiences which are qualitatively different from those in the regular classroom. A defensible goal of gifted education can be to help students become *producers* of knowledge, not just *consumers*. How can we reach this goal in the arts? David Melton's (1985) *Written and Illustrated by...* is a ready-to-use curriculum unit which provides a good model.

Billed as "a revolutionary two-brain approach for teaching students how to write and illustrate amazing books," this set of 17 lesson plans leads students through a process which results in a bound book for each author/illustrator. On their way to producing a bound volume, students learn the structure by which published authors and illustrators work.

Students begin by forming a publishing company, then fill out an employment application to become an editor and art director. Next they enter into a written contract with the publisher to author and illustrate a book of 16 pages in length. The contract proposes a book title, describes a brief synopsis of the story and specifies what media will be used for illustration.

One early session of the lesson plans deals with basic elements of a story: how to create setting, mood, historical period, introduce characters and write believable dialogue. Writer's block is addressed, too. Once story drafts are written, students learn how to use professional editorial markings and become editors for each others' manuscripts.

With stories ready to go, students learn how to lay out a 16-page book and drawing begins. Melton (1985) comments that experience has convinced him "regardless of what level of drawing skill each possesses, all children have a terrific, innate sense of the elements of a good book illustration" (p. 65). By the time students have completed at least two illustrations, they learn to become art directors whose function is to "improve the work of the illustrator; it is not to intimidate nor destroy the confidence of the illustrator" (p. 66).

Once illustrations have been made, jacket design and construction becomes the next task. Students then learn to do front and back pages, title and half-title pages. Students proceed to paste-up covers, fold and label signature sheets, trim and paste-up pages, and stitch-bind the books with carpet thread. The entire process can be accomplished in a five-day workshop or in 17 class periods.

For gifted students, one of the best things about this curriculum is students have not only learned how to create a handmade book, they have also learned to prepare a manuscript for a specific publisher—an important skill for a "real" writer or author. Books created by this process may be submitted to Melton's Kansas City publishing company, Landmark Editions. Each year three books authored by students will be selected for publication. Authors as young as six-year-old Dennis Vollmer (see *Joshua Disobeys*) have been published.

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Vollmer, D. (1987). *Joshua Disobeys*. Kansas City: Landmark Editions.

Karen C. Nelson, Ph.D., is Coordinator of the graduate program in gifted education at Emporia State University in Kansas. She has been a public school teacher, curriculum editor, writer and poet.

THE READING ROOM

Welcome to the Reading Room and to the strange territory of two books whose authors set themselves almost impossible tasks and proceed, dazzlingly, to accomplish them. If you are—or are dealing with—a gifted kid who loves discussion and argument (are there any other kinds?) these books will offer plenty of mental ammunition. Both are by British writers.

The first is *Eva*, by Peter Dickinson. The time is the indeterminate future, when the planet, almost devoid of other animal life, has been overcrowded with humans. Eva's father is a primate zoologist working with "The Pool," a collection of chimpanzees who have been saved for experimentation. Eva has grown up with chimps.

Now, at thirteen, Eva wakens in a hospital room, unable to remember anything since a picnic at the beach with her parents and two young chimps. Gradually, she learns that there has been an accident; she has been in a coma; her life has been saved by a kind of miracle, an experiment at the far edges of medical technology. She *is* Eva. She is also someone else. Her mind is her own (or mostly her own—there are the dreams of trees); her body is the body of Kelly, a young female chimpanzee.

The story that follows is an extraordinary exploration of the boundaries between human life and the life of another species. In a time of often simplistic "animal rights" crusades, *Eva* addresses the phenomenal complexity of life on an endangered planet, and the responsibility of humans to that planet and to its other life forms. A challenging, controversial book, this one should not be missed!

The second is *A Chance Child*, by Jill Paton Walsh. As at the beginning of *Eva*, there is uncertainty at the beginning of this book. A thin, dirty, raggedly clothed child fights "its" way out of a disintegrating cardboard box on a rain-soaked dump, surrounded by factories and residences being demolished by a wrecking ball. Looking for a place to shelter, the child finds a rotting barge with a small cabin. This is Creep (a name judged to be the better of the two his mother calls him —"that creep" and "that bugger"), and when the rain ends he trudges along the towpath of an old canal, pulling his boat behind him.

In the second chapter we meet Chris, searching the dump for him, and the reader begins the parallel journeys of two children in different worlds. For Creep has somehow followed the canal back in time, into the England of the Industrial Revolution, and his brother Chris is carrying on the search along the same canal in the twentieth century.

At home the unwanted Creep had lived confined to a tiny closet beneath the stairs, fed scraps saved for him by his brother and sister. A shocked neighbor who caught sight of him once said, "It's like the bad old days." Remembering this comment as he searches for the brother only he cares for, Chris begins to understand that Creep has somehow gone back to those days. As strange as it seems, it accounts for the fact that the signs Creep has left him to follow are ancient signs —"Creep" scratched into an old bridge, the letters cracked and filled with moss.

Meanwhile, Creep has found two companions, children enslaved as cogs in the great industrial machine. Knowing little of the twentieth century, he slips easily into the late eighteenth, where he can be seen only by other children as miserable as he.

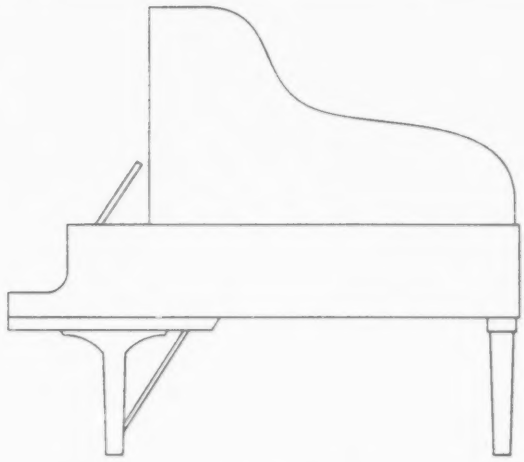
This book is a stunning examination of an era when children were little more than machine parts. It is fantasy, history, and mystery—suspenseful, passionate and moving.

Stephanie Tolan, from Columbus, Ohio, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child.*

Music Instruction for the Gifted:

A Perspective for Teachers

Annette Stock, M.A.



Teaching piano for two decades and working with gifted children in the capacity of a school psychologist for several years has provided me with some useful insights into the music instruction needs of the intellectually gifted child. The intellectually gifted child may or may not be a musically talented child. However, music instruction for such a child may require a modified approach depending on the unique abilities of the individual child.

Intellectually gifted children and the musically talented child are both characterized by rapidity of learning. They seem to be "quick learners" and are able to apply learned concepts to new situations, perhaps being able to further elaborate on the concepts as initially presented. They are adept at recognizing patterns. Other characteristics that the two populations seem to share include an unusual sensitivity, keen sense of observation, good memory, curiosity and creativity. Since every child is unique, every child may not be equally skilled in all of these areas.

In music, the physical and emotional capabilities of an individual unite with the intellectual to enable one to excel at playing an instrument. As modes of learning, the child's auditory, visual and kinesthetic/fine-motor abilities greatly influence his or her musical progress. Difficulties in any of these areas constitute learning deficits (commonly referred to as learning disabilities in education). Unfortunately, the intellectually gifted as well as the musically talented child may have learning disabilities. It is a challenge for music educators, experienced in the realm of pedagogy but typically not learning disabilities, to help their students either remediate or compensate for these difficulties in order to enhance their musical experience.

It is common for the intellectually gifted child's fine-motor abilities to lag behind his or her intellectual abilities. This situation causes a great deal of frustration within the music realm because the child is unable to effect with his fingers what his mind and perhaps his "ear" so aptly understands. If the child's understanding of music were at a level commensurate with his immature fine-motor ability, no dilemma would exist; the music teacher would simply select technically easy pieces for the student to play. However, it is important to remember the characteristics (and, therefore, needs) of the intellectually gifted child: advanced conceptual abilities, sensitivity, creativity, good memory and observational skills. The selection of appropriate pieces should be based not only on the appropriate level of technical skill necessary to successfully perform a piece, but the theoretical aspects of the work, as well as its musical and interest appeal. It is unmotivating to insult the intelligence of the intellectually gifted child by providing him with juvenile materials simply because they are technically appropriate.

There are many supplementary materials that have high interest value and whose technical requirements are modest. The abundance of supplementary materials is a result of the pedagogical advancements and increased understanding of the psychological aspects of teaching that have been made in recent years. Many of these materials are quite creative, allowing for exploration of sounds and the portrayal of ideas with sound. Progress has also been made in the availability of educational pieces which are highly musical in their sound but not technically difficult to play. Such selections engage the intellectually gifted child's sensitivity. Program music or teaching techniques that are high in emotional or visual connotations may also enable the instructor to access the child's innate emotional sensitivity. For example, asking the child to imagine walking through the forest on a still, balmy night may help her to express her emotions when playing a nocturne *(night song)*. Children who have a less emotional

(Continued on page 8)

perspective of life benefit from a more concrete teaching approach, such as instructing them to play quietly instead of encouraging them to think of lulling a baby to sleep.

Because the intellectually gifted child requires conceptually advanced material, a discussion of advanced musical ideas such as musical form, key, chord progressions, etc., is appropriate and enhances not only the children's understanding of music but concurrently their pleasure and interest level. Of course, these ideas should be an integral part of the musical training of all students at the appropriate time. The conceptual advancement of intellectually gifted children requires them to be approached with these ideas even though they may not appear musically "ready."

Many music students have varying degrees of one or more learning problems. Most individuals have a preferred learning mode, either auditory or visual. The kinesthetic sense is also important in the performance of a musical instrument. In music, total reliance on one mode to the exclusion of the others appears to interfere with musical progress. A student who favors the visual mode may be quite proficient at translating the written music to the keyboard (in the case of a piano), but have difficulty hearing and, thus, expressing the subtle nuances of sound. Listening activities, including tapes of lesson material, help develop these abilities. Some students have difficulty coordinating their hands and sequencing hand movements. Encouraging them to pat the rhythms of the music on their thighs (right hand, left hand, both hands) can help with this problem.

One intellectually gifted student with whom I am acquainted has such extraordinary conceptual, memory and auditory skills that she has had difficulty learning to read music. Since rote memory drills are distasteful to the gifted child, easy sight reading exercises allow for the variety and yet disguised repetition necessary to stimulate the child's reading skills. Having the child notate melodies played by the teacher or her own compositions may also encourage the development of reading skills.

The problems associated with teaching an intellectually gifted child to play an instrument are as diverse as the unique abilities that each child brings to the experience. With understanding, persistence and creativity, music instructors have an opportunity to increase the musical success of each of their gifted students.

Annette Stock, M.A., is a piano instructor and school psychologist. She is Director of Training at the Gifted Child Development Center, Denver, Colorado.

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Love of beauty and of all lovely and wonderful things is indispensable for our growth. It brings reverence and a sense of transcendence into personal love, and indeed into all of life.

—Julian Huxley—

the arts. Those talented in the arts need to develop both of these abilities. Gifted students generally can find rich intellectual experiences in studying the arts through aesthetics, philosophy, history and all of the humanities. The answer to the question of "Arts for whom?" is that we need arts for all children, but that there are unique intellectual experiences especially for the gifted and talented.

WHAT CAN THE ARTS PROVIDE?

As advocates for the gifted we must also become advocates for the arts if we are to have our children move from the focus on the head to the heart and soul of human experience which make a whole individual. Education focuses on the average head. Gifted education focuses on the above average head. The arts give us an opportunity to move beyond the narrow intellectual pursuits of even "good" schooling. Specifically, the arts provide:

- a universal means of communication as both creator and observer
- a mechanism to transmit and understand a culture across generations
- a means to understand the underlying concepts of many subjects in the curriculum through the elements of sound, movement, color, mass, energy, space, line, shape, and language
- the medium for expressing deep emotions in verbal or non-verbal forms
- an integrating force that weaves through the humanities and provides emotional voice and insight to knowledges
- a connection to play and childhood essential to the development of sensitivity and creativity which can be applied to any human endeavor irrespective of age
- attention to personal observation, self awareness, and self expression which is important in the development of self-esteem
- a sense of pleasure, challenge, and mystery which can bring learning to life

As advocates for the gifted we must also become advocates for the arts if we are to have our children move from the focus on the head to the heart and soul of human experience which make a whole individual.

WHAT IS ART?

This philosophical question calls for both a philosophical and a practical answer. The philosophical is best described by John Dewey (1934) in his landmark work, *Art as Experience*:

> *The real work of art is the building up of an integral experience out of the interaction of organic and environmental conditions and energies...The thing expressed is wrung from the producer by the pressure exercised by objective things upon the natural impulses and tendencies...The act of expression that constitutes a work of art is a construction in time, not an instantaneous emission...It means that the expression of the self in and through a medium, constituting the work of art is itself a prolonged interaction of something issuing from the self with objective conditions, a process in which both of them acquire a form and order they did not at first possess. (pp. 64-65)*

This philosophy should be translated into basic curriculum principles which can be explicitly taught to students:

- Making art requires an integrating and interactive process to produce it
- The artistic process uses emotion combined with objective materials and forms
- Art takes a prolonged time to produce
- Art is an expression of self into the work being created
- The product culminates in both the artist and the medium for the art acquiring characteristics that are new and perhaps unique

The most practical answer to what is art is defined in practice as five major areas of human endeavor which can guide curriculum development. The five areas are: *visual art, music, dance, creative writing, and theater.* A process which can overlay these areas is collaboration among the arts which allows for an even higher level of student growth.

CREATING ARTS PROGRAMS FOR THE GIFTED

There are some excellent models around the country for arts programs for talented and gifted students. Some are no cost or low cost and some are expensive, but each strategy outlined below could improve opportunities for our students.

- Allow talented elementary students to attend secondary school arts classes where facilities and instruction are better or more challenging
- Cluster group talented students together for master classes and offer advanced instruction

(Continued on page 10)

- Create arts magnet schools for comprehensive approaches to the most talented students
- Articulate existing school-based arts programs with students' private instructors for an individualized program of talent development
- Use the artists-in-residence program through the state arts councils to focus on the talented students in a school
- Use local artists as community mentors and classroom resource instructors to supplement the school-based arts programs
- Create alternatives within each discipline not typically found such as: music composition, conducting, theatrical directing, non-traditional art media, writing novels or longer works, choreography
- Create real outlets for the students products or performances such as a commercial gallery exhibit, writing for publication, solo or ensemble performances with adult dance or music groups
- Develop collaborations among the arts

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Parents are often frustrated by the lack of attention given to the arts in typical school curricula. This is compounded by the costs of private arts instruction which are often beyond the means of many families. Schools tell parents that the arts are frills and beyond the responsibility of public education. Parents might consider the three "A" approaches in dealing with limited options.

Advocacy

Join forces with parents of gifted children and demand appropriate instruction in the arts through the program approaches mentioned earlier. Advocates for arts programs can also be found outside the gifted and talented organizations in state and local arts education groups, your state arts council, as well as teacher groups which are organized by discipline (e.g. music teachers, dance teachers, etc.). These arts groups are also useful in locating inexpensive arts instruction or special programs if they exist nearby.

The arts are not "frills" but provide a basis for understanding self and the cultural heritage of humankind.

Avocational Artists

While you may not be able to find or afford professional arts instruction, you may be able to find avocational artists who do their art as a hobby and who might be willing to mentor your talented child at least until the child exceeds the adult's level of skill. Even at that point the adult can do some coaching or networking with other artists.

Appreciation/Aesthetics

If it is not possible to obtain arts instruction in the talent area of your child, there is still access to printed matter which can enhance the study of the discipline. Reading biographies of great artists in the area, attending performances, visiting museums, or studying related criticism, history or philosophy, are all good ways to keep the interest alive. It might also be possible to find correspondence courses at an appropriate level.

As a final note, parents often inquire about career outlets in the arts and whether they should steer their youngster into more academic pursuits. Clearly the career opportunities in performance areas are very competitive and very limited. However, there are other career opportunities in the arts which are not in performance but supporting areas or management. It may be that the talented child should be encouraged to pursue the arts area avocationally. In today's performance art careers, unless the individual has a real passion and sustained commitment along with a high level of mastery, it is not likely that he or she could compete successfully. In such instances, the avocational route to enjoy the artistic talent should be recommended.

CONCLUSION

The arts present too rich an opportunity not to be exploited on behalf of gifted students. They are worthy of support as a legitimate curriculum which offers highly intellectual and challenging learning experiences. As in other areas of gifted education, sustained advocacy is necessary to start and maintain quality programs in the arts. The arts are not "frills" but provide a basis for understanding self and the cultural heritage of humankind.

NOTE:

[1]Mussorgsky, M. in Tripp, R. (1970). *Thesaurus of quotations*. (p. 674). New York: Crowell.

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Kenneth R. Seeley, Ed.D. is Special Projects Consultant for the Colorado Trust, a philanthropic foundation in Denver, Colorado. He has done extensive writing and research in the area of gifted education.

> *Visual thinking directs figures on a chessboard and designs global politics on the map. (p. 7)*

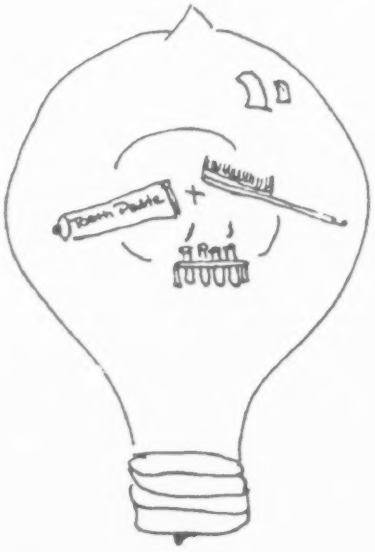
Visual thinking recorded in brief sketches is a natural method to remember and generate more ideas. The artist and inventor, Leonardo da Vinci, capitalized on the process of drawing (Taylor, 1971). Drawing was his secret in creating his many inventions and ideas. His notebooks and sketchbooks contain hundreds of detailed drawings of birds, fish, human organs, human figures, and plants. He observed nature in minute detail and imitated it in his inventions. According to Curtiss (1987), this quality of "seeing knowledge" is difficult to describe in words; it can best be expressed in drawings. "Seeing knowledge" is not only found in drawings but in design plans, photography and sculpture.

In his autobiographical notes, Einstein (in Hadamard, 1954) emphasized the nonverbal nature of his thought process using seeing and thinking:

> *What precisely, is "thinking"? When at the reception of sense-impressions, memory pictures emerge, this is not yet "thinking." And when such pictures form series, each member of which calls forth another, this, too, is not yet "thinking." When, however, a certain picture turns up in many such series then precisely through such return it becomes an ordering element for such series, in that it connects series which in themselves are unconnected pictures. For me it is not dubious that our thinking goes on for the most part without use of words. (p. 86)*

The visual thinker uses seeing and thinking in a fluid way, moving from one kind of imagery to another. For example, Sir Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin was the result of transforming a routine laboratory accident into the detection of penicillin. Fleming saw bacteria that could be used in his experiment that other scientists overlooked. Fleming, like most creative observers, possessed a habit of mind of seeing things from new angles. He was not burdened by the "inveterate tradition according to which thinking takes place remote from perceptual experience" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 14). He did not look and then sit down to think but rather used his active eyes and mind together. Hill (1966) describes the spontaneous seeing and thinking as a mirror. "A drawing acts as the reflection of the visual mind" (p. 34).

Consider the possibilities of using seeing and thinking together as a learning tool. By combining seeing and thinking the learners become more effective innovators and productive problem solvers. For example, the learner could see a problem from several angles and perhaps even choose to solve it in the direct context of seeing. Now prepared with a visual understanding of the problem, the learner thinks of alternative solutions. Finally, rather than trust to memory, the learner draws a few quick sketches of possible solutions to the problem. *(See Drawing #1 below.)*



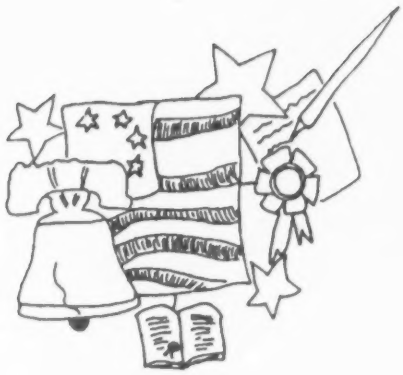
Drawing #1

DRAWING AS A THINKING TOOL

J.P. Guilford (1967) introduced the concepts of fluency and flexibility—the flow and variety of ideas. *Fluency* is demonstrated by generating many ideas, which improves the quality of ideas and increases the number of original ones. Having learners keep a sketchbook is an easy way to record the flow of ideas. The sketchbook allows the learner to record sketches when the ideas begin to flow; thus, no idea is lost.

Idea sketching encourages fluency and flexibility. *Flexibility* differs from fluency in that it involves the generation of a variety, rather than a large number, of ideas. One strategy for generating a variety of ideas is visual brainstorming. The traditional use of brainstorming is an idea-generating activity that can be performed individually or in a group with ideas written down on the blackboard or paper. Visual brainstorming is using drawing as a tool to record ideas. For example, the learner could take the problem of interest such as "democracy" and generate a variety of thumbnail idea-sketches based on the concept of "seeing knowledge." The produced sketches would

(Continued on page 12)



Drawing #2

provide a variety of solutions to the problem—categories to explore, such as fireworks, the flag, metals, and statues (flexibility of ideas). *(See Drawing #2 above.)*

Idea sketches can be a personal thinking tool in any subject. Idea sketching is used to clarify thinking rather than to communicate ideas to others. For example, when a learner is having difficulty understanding a concept, a quick sketch will help him clarify the concept. In a history lesson the learner could be asked to design a map of a specific time period in past, present, or future. A concept being introduced in an English lesson could be in the form of a tree diagram—a visual representation of an idea. The learner would need to consider what the concept would look like. During a science lesson the learner could draw the structure of a cell or the veins of a leaf the way he thinks the system or process would look. *(See Drawing #3 .)*

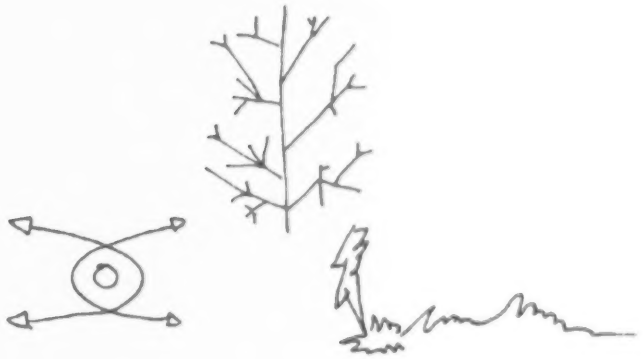
According to Nicolaides (1941),

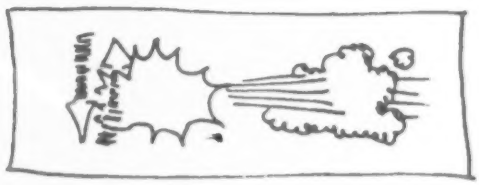
drawing as a tool of thinking has nothing to do with technique. It has nothing to do with aesthetics or conception. It has nothing to do with the act of correct observation, by that I mean a physical contact with all sorts of objects through all the senses. (p. xiii)

Drawing as a visual approach to learning gives the student many advantages. By drawing in notes, the learner is often better able to "see knowledge," which assists the ability to recall and remember. Relationships can be seen and remembered. "Seeing knowledge" contributes to the flow and flexibility of thinking that results in better ideas.

"SEEING KNOWLEDGE"

One strategy of "seeing knowledge" is mapping ideas. Mapping is the process of drawing the main theme in the center of the paper and arranging other ideas around the main theme with lines and arrows connecting more ideas. Colored markers or pencils can be used to emphasize specific aspects of the map. The use of color separates ideas so that they can be visualized easily and remembered. The visual imagery of mapping represents connections more easily than does a linear outline. As a personal thinking tool, mapping encourages learners to determine the best way to represent information for themselves. In *Make the Most of Your Mind*, Tony Buzan (1986) suggests that mapping is a basic study skill to take notes, to review and remember information, to plan, and to *(Continued on page 12)*





Drawing #3

solve problems. It also aids understanding. *(See Drawing #4 .)*

As a concept, object or idea is drawn it becomes more concrete and clear in one's mind. For the artist and inventor, the process of drawing is a way to transform ideas into paintings and inventions. For the gifted learner who is identified as a "spatial learner" (Silverman, 1989), drawing can improve creativity and accomplishments in solving problems. By drawing solutions to a problem, concept, or idea, spatial learners can capitalize on their learning style of viewing the whole situation at once rather than as a step-by-step process. Idea sketching may be an answer to clarifying thinking for spatial learners since they prefer to develop their own strategies of solving problems. As a systems thinker, the spatial learner using mind mapping could easily make connections by "seeing knowledge" about the whole idea and drawing in the parts of the solutions. This would aid in remembering and understanding. Thus, drawing can be an asset for the gifted learner since it goes beyond forms of expression to forms that serve as thinking tools.

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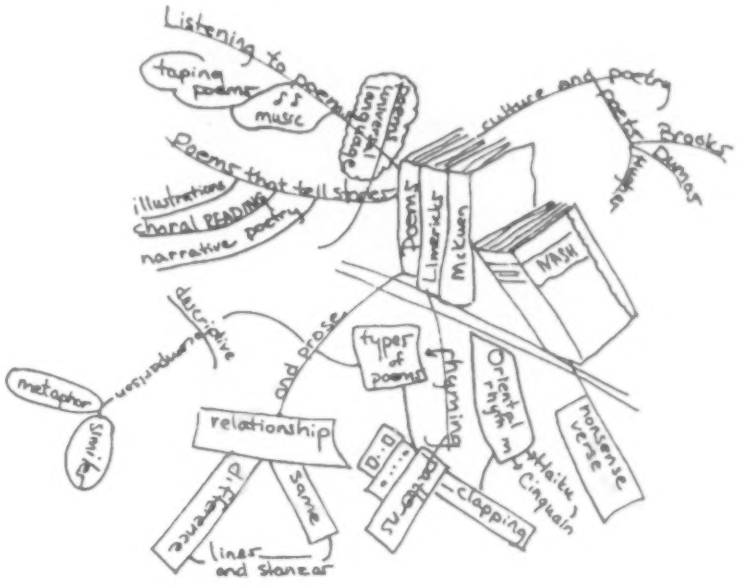
Jeanie Goertz, Ed.D. is an instructor at Northern Arizona University. She has just completed the educational leadership doctorate program. Jeanie is co-chair of the Visual and Performing Arts Division of NAGC and a former art teacher and coordinator of gifted programs.



Drawing #4

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL: *A Journal on Adult Giftedness*

Gifted children usually have gifted parents. If you are wondering about your own giftedness, subscribe to **Advanced Development:** ***A Journal on Adult Giftedness.*** No other journal focuses specifically on gifted adults. Unlike the traditional view of adult giftedness as high levels of productivity and creativity, advanced development in adults is defined as the deepening of the personality and strengthening of human values such as empathy, concern for others, responsibility and integrity.

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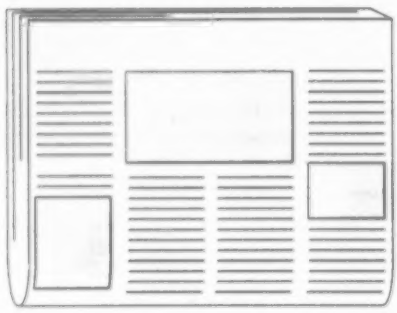
Kathi Kearney

THE HIGHLY GIFTED

Highly Gifted Children and the Press – Part II



Life Magazine, Parade, the *New York Times,* the *New York Times Magazine,* CBS News 48 Hours, and a host of national and local talk shows and newspaper articles have all featured stories about highly gifted children and child prodigies within the past year. This American phenomenon of prodigy-watching is nothing new; as early as 1911, *American Magazine* featured the Victorian era's latest crop of prodigies, including such celebrated children as William James Sidis, Winifred Stoner, and A. A. Berle (Bruce, 1911).

But what if it is *your* child the press wants to interview? In the last column, we discussed some of the difficult questions families face as they confront media attention, including the conservative and safe response—just saying no. However, for those families who find themselves in the midst of media attention either by chance or by choice, this issue's column provides a number of specific suggestions.

Remember that you can always say no.

You are not obligated to talk to the press. In many cases (perhaps most), it will be better for you and for your child if you do not. Press attention has a way of getting out of hand, even under the best of circumstances, and highly gifted children often cherish their privacy (Hollingworth, 1942).

Ask for time to consider whether or not to do the interview.

Most situations will not require an immediate interview, even though the reporter may want it; depending on the type of press coverage, the reporter may be able to wait for a few days or even a week or two. Much of the publicity about highly gifted children is in the form of feature articles or television documentaries, in which there is much more lead time for the reporter than in a late-breaking story. Get all the information that you can about both the interview process and the publication or television show in which the proposed interview will appear, including the reporter's name and a description of the audience. If there's time, do some homework. Read back issues of the publication (especially other stories about related topics, and other stories by the same reporter); watch a segment of the television program, or listen to the radio talk show.

Make the decision as a family whether or not to talk to the press.

Neither parent should make such a decision alone; unity is essential. You will need the support of each other. Consider your child's wishes—no child ever should be forced to participate in an interview. Be prepared for some unforeseen ramifications within the family if you decide to go ahead with news coverage: sometimes siblings feel left out, jealous, or even frightened.

Understand the media's role.

The same news media that uncovered the Watergate scandal, explained "smart bombs" to a worldwide television audience, and brought the Vietnam War into your living room will be interviewing you and your child. Their objective is to get the story, make it interesting and simple enough for a wide audience, investigate, and raise alternative points of view. Do not be surprised if you are asked tough questions on the one hand, or if complicated concepts are portrayed simplistically on the other. The press may well interview someone who is in disagreement with your point of view, and then juxtapose the two interviews in the final copy. The press's job is to get the story; your job, if you decide to talk to the press at all, is to protect your child from undue exploitation. Occasionally, there will be a collision between these two responsibilities.

Think before you speak.

This is good advice any time, but critical when talking to a reporter. You do not have to give an instant answer. Listen carefully to each of the reporter's questions, and take a moment to think about it. Answer clearly, and concisely, if you can.

Double-check the facts with the reporter.

In the midst of an interview, you or your child may neglect to give complete information, or the reporter may have recorded information incorrectly. The reporter needs complete, clear and accurate information. Before concluding the interview, double-check important facts with the reporter.

Treat everything you say as if it were on the record.

Even if the reporter assures you that you are talking to her "off the record," keep in mind that what you say will shape her perception of your child, your family, and the issues involved. Now is not the time to mention your marital problems, a disagreement you've had with the child's teacher, or what the neighbors think. Sometimes information ostensibly given "off the record" finds its way into a news story anyhow. The prudent course is to treat *everything* you say to a reporter as if it were on the record.

Understand that press coverage makes your child traceable, now and in the future.

Publicity cannot be recalled. If your child's story ends up in the *New York Times*, for instance, his or her name will be listed permanently in the New York Times Index. If you agree to one story with one publication, expect to receive other publicity "offers." For example, on the recent CBS News 48 Hours segment about child prodigies, most of the children featured had experienced extensive media coverage in the past.

Choosing whether or not to participate in press coverage is a difficult decision. It should be a decision informed by thorough family discussion, a rudimentary understanding of how the press works and what some of the unforeseen consequences of press coverage can be, and the child's own developmental patterns. No one has a crystal ball; no one can predict the outcome of media coverage ahead of time. It is always a judgment call. Those families who choose to tell their stories to the world via the camera's lens and the reporter's voice do deserve credit: without their stories, extraordinary giftedness would remain shrouded in mystery for the general public, instead of being given names, faces, and a growing realization, that the prodigy can also be the child next door.

FOR FURTHER READING

Hermann, K. E. (1982, Nov/Dec). Publicity and the prodigy, *G/C/T*, 60-61.

Hermann's short article describes additional considerations for families contemplating or caught in the middle of press coverage.

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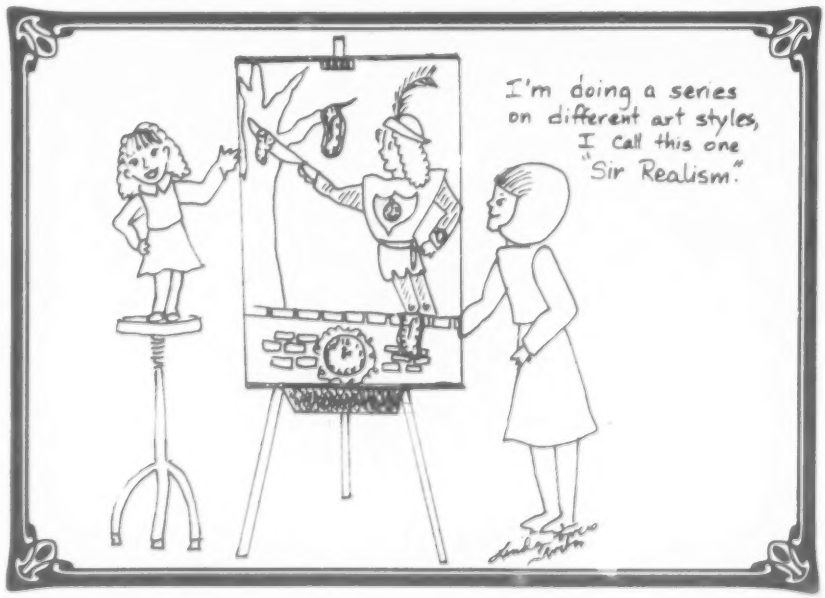
Kathi Kearney is Founder of the Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children in Auburn, Maine, and is a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University.



BRIGHT BEGINNINGS

Setting Ourselves Free

So what's the big challenge to being the parent of a gifted child?

All those nifty characteristics make it sound like a piece of cake, right? Hardly! Raising any child and doing it well will be the challenge of a lifetime for most parents. When you add on an exceptionality, whether it is a handicap or a gift (and please bear in mind that a number of children come to us with both) the parenting challenges become particularly intense. Just the term "gifted" carries a great deal of baggage along with it. Rather than adding to the load, today you have permission to drop some of it off in the dust at your feet, because YOU DON'T NEED IT!

Let Go of Expecting Gifted Kids to Be Little Grownups

Just because your child has been blessed with very powerful and advanced thinking abilities doesn't mean that somebody waved a magic wand and accelerated her physical and social development, too. She will spill her milk, forget to feed the cat, hate baths and lose her mittens just like any other kid her age.

Let Go of "Wonder-Kid"

Wonder-kids read Greek enthusiastically in preschool and joyfully know the scientific names for 35 animals while still in diapers. Real kids enthusiastically read Dr. Seuss while still in preschool and joyfully recognize the name of MacDonalds when they drive past the golden arches. In my experience, the only ones who get terribly excited about the achievements of "super babies" are the parents who devoted endless hours to the drill and card flashing that produced them. David Elkind wrote a wonderful book, entitled *The Hurried Child*, that addresses this idea at length. The real question seems to be: what is the pressing need for a baby to be learning Latin, anyway? Whose needs is that fulfilling? Little kiddos, and bigger ones, too, need "messing around" time. They need time to explore, experiment and learn about their world at their own pace more than they need all the flashcards in the world.

Let Go of 'The Burden'

The Burden, of course, is the load some people feel was dropped on their shoulders the day they learned they had a gifted child at their house. The Burden is a giant burlap sack filled with smaller packages neatly labeled, *"Guilt," "Drive More," "Buy More,"* and *"Make More Money."* Sometimes The Burden gets so heavy that the poor parents can barely stagger through the day. They are afraid that if they don't somehow come up with the cash for one more Suzuki lesson or to buy the $900 set of encyclopedias that they will be impairing their child's future. *Don't you believe it!*

Beside meeting their basic physical needs, there are only two things that your gifted child really needs from you, and neither one costs a cent. That doesn't mean that some days they might not be the two hardest things to give. Your child needs to be sustained by your love and your time more than anything money can buy. That loving, patient nurturing of our gifted kids is what's really worth holding tight. Feel free to let go of the rest.

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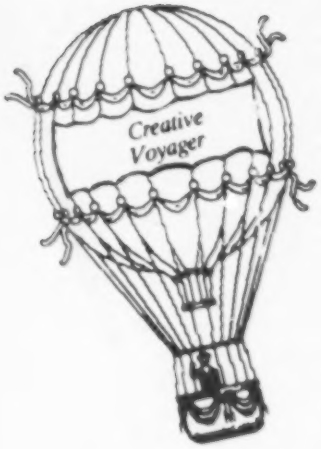
Suzanne Perry, Ph.D., is Instructional Resource for Project Think in the Aurora Public Schools in Colorado, and author of the children's book, *Giftedness: Living with it and Liking it.*

IN SEARCH OF SERENDIPITY



Creative Ventures And Encounters

Jerry Flack
Tour Guide

Little in the way of luggage is required for this creative journey; paper, pencil and an openness to one's environment will suffice along with a commitment and determination to set aside a portion of each day to keep a journal.

Journal keeping has a distinguished history. Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and many, many more creative people have kept journals. Creative people recognize the valuable role journals play in the creative process. Creativity doesn't just happen. It is realized through a series of steps taken which include inquiry, observation, reflection, incubation, hypothesis formation, experimentation, confirmation, and re-examination. Journal keeping is a powerful tool when utilized to activate these steps.

It is unfortunate that journal keeping has become the target of some groups critical of public school educational practices. Journals need not and should not be invasions of student privacy. Students should keep journals to develop thinking and writing skills. Journals should also be recognized for their role in conversation. Infant ideas are among the most endangered of species. Fledgling ideas that are not noted in journals for later consideration and elaboration are most likely lost forever.

Journals are exceptionally useful and habit-forming. The following ideas and strategies may be employed to initiate young people into the positive practice of journal keeping.

Use journals as travel logs. When students are to be absent from school for family trips, make-up work can take the form of journal entries. Encourage students to describe the sights, sounds, smells, and impressions of the places they visit. What unusual people do they observe? What is the most creative product or souvenir they see? What new things do they learn? How does this new information expand their existing knowledge base?

Journals make terrific file folders. Fill journals with character sketches, catch phrases, new words, pieces of dialogue overheard or imagined, and small gems of verbal imagery that may ultimately be incorporated into poems and short stories.

Journals can serve as the laboratories where gifted students brainstorm possible experiments to be conducted for future science fair projects of independent study modules.

Journals should contain more than words. Doodles and sketches are most appropriate. More than one patent dispute has been settled when one of the parties involved had been able to produce a dated drawing which established prior claim.

Journals are the vaults in which students record and reflect upon significant events in their lives:

I gave my first-ever speech today. I was really nervous, but I am proud of both my courage and preparation.

Journals definitely may serve as friendly sounding boards where students can safely try out new ideas and possibilities, sort priorities, and engage in creative problem solving.

ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

"I want to be all through with school and out in the world!" Twelve-year-old Marcus has only been in my office 30 seconds when he issues this proclamation.

I am saddened by such negativism at so early an age, but I am not shocked. Marcus is not the only child who has expressed such feelings to me. And many children harbor such sentiments even when they don't articulate them.

Marcus will probably never be among the school district drop-out statistics. He loves learning too much. In fact, he wants to become an astrophysicist. But he is not happy in school. There is no challenge. In Marcus's words, "I have six more years of this garbage to wade through. Why can't they give me a test that will prove that I'm ready to go to college?"

I am saddened and helpless. The routine answers— "You have to learn more about life," "You have to socialize with your peers," "You have to grow up"—are too shallow, too lacking in substance for this astute young man-child.

So, as is my habit when I need expert guidance, I turn to my bookshelves, to the words of wisdom written by colleagues who have done in-depth research on education and its implications for the students we serve. I find a wealth of research and theory and philosophy that will reform and restructure and improve education. I find fascinating reading about standards and schools of choice and national goals. But I don't find the answer for Marcus.

Much has been written about reform in education and about what is required to raise the United States to a position of educational leadership by the year 2000. However, I'm not sure that much of it addresses the development of children who function far above the norm. I don't think that educational reform takes into account the very children who can and will —if allowed—become the outstanding leaders that we require. Many unhappy gifted children don't understand the challenge in reforms.

Certainly, I am encouraged by the strides we have made in empowering teachers, forming parent partnerships and working cooperatively with business. In the last decade, the institution of education has moved from passive acceptance of archaic structure to active involvement with many arms of the community. But there is still something fundamentally wrong with a system of education that evokes such despair in bright students, and such helplessness in those who would advise them.

Marcus, I hurt for you. You are what reform is all about.

Dorothy Knopper is a Private Consultant on the Gifted in Colorado and "Open Space" columnist for *Roeper Review*.

Creative Ventures *(Continued)*

> *What are all the benefits I might derive from having my own paper route? What problems might such a new job create?*
>
> Of course, journals also provide a great place for students to keep laundry lists of things to do, books to read, assignments to complete, wish lists, letters to write, etc.

Journals are not just for young people. Just as parents and teachers should be seen reading to be effective examples of literacy in action, they should also be observed in the process of keeping journals.

Parents and teachers can also initiate journal dialogues with youth. The procedure is simple. The student periodically offers his or her journal to the teacher or parent for reading, always noting in the margins passages that are private and should not be read. The reader responds to the writer with comments, suggestions, answers, and questions about the topics the student has addressed. Young people enjoy the personal touch two-way journal communication provides.

Journals become personal time capsules. Years from today young people can observe their personal evolution and development documented in their journals. As hard as it may be to imagine, today's 15 year-olds will be parents themselves one day. If they keep journals, preserve them, and have the wisdom to consult them years hence, their memories will be yet green, and they may have a greater appreciation and empathy for the struggles their own children will face. Encourage the youth you know to begin keeping a journal today. And don't forget to write in your own!

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and author of *Inventing, Inventions and Inventors.*

from parent to parent

"Kids who are involved in the arts don't fit into the structured programs and a lot of damage to their psyche can be done trying to fit them in. They struggle to find an identity and they bump up against a pretty rigid system."

Ande Gardner, parent of three highly gifted girls, has worked as a Chapter 1 assistant, teaching remedial reading and math (kindergarten to 4th grade). She reports finding that many of the children who were there for assistance were also gifted in the arts.

"When teaching, I sought out the really artistic kids. A lot of times the kids that were given to me needing remedial help were very artistic children. I remember a little Indian girl who was sent to Chapter 1 for help in math. I discovered that what she really wanted to do was to write poetry and draw. So, I used a right brained approach—I let her illustrate her math papers and use a purple crayon to do the problems. She is an honor student now."

"Some kids need structure because they don't have any internal structure, but most artistic kids have their own agenda, and their own structure: how they organize their thoughts, their day, and their world to different degrees. For example, one very artistic boy that I taught would become very incensed with the bells that marked the end of time periods. He couldn't stand the thought of his art not being finished. And he always wanted to keep his art works, not hang them up or give them to his teacher."

Ande's daughter Cory, 14, is a talented violinist. Cory teaches younger students to play by developing lessons around the kids. "She encourages them to write their own music using the notes she has taught them that day. She's taking what stimulated her and using it to stimulate the artistic side of her students."

Life as a serious student of the arts is difficult in a traditional school system. Excellence in a particular talent area is often compromised in order to achieve a measure of success in all subject areas.

"Cory gets frustrated because of the amount of homework. When she would like to practice her violin, she usually doesn't have that freedom because she also wants to get good grades. What children like this need is a lot of time and an unstructured program. We struggle with how to balance it all. Maybe if the academic program were more integrated with the arts, there wouldn't be so many tough choices."

Lisa Ferguson is from Haverill, Massachusetts and the parent of highly gifted children.

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WANTED: Student Research for the inauguration of Volume 4 of *Understanding Our Gifted*. We have an excellent submission by 2 middle school students on self-concept of gifted students in middle school and are looking for a complimentary lead article, preferably by a middle school student (or team). We need the article by July 1st, 8-10 pages double-spaced. Send to Snowpeak Publishing, P.O. Box 3489, Littleton, CO 80161. Please pass the word. Thanks.

ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT

Volume 3 of ***Advanced Development***, the first journal on adult giftedness, is now available. In keeping with the philosophy of *Understanding Our Gifted*, this companion volume focuses on inner development rather than achievement. The theme of this issue is "The Possible Human," and the featured theorist is Jean Houston. Etty Hillesum, our moral exemplar, was an inspirational person who attained inner peace during the holocaust. *Don't miss this issue!* Subscription rate is currently $15 for individuals or institutions. *See order form on page 13.*

Structure-of-Intellect (SOI) Training Seminars

Basic training seminars on the SOI will be held in Vida, OR on June 20-21. Intermediate training is offered in Vida on June 25-26. Advanced training will be held in Vida on June 27-28 and in Holland on July 26-27. For more information, contact Dr. Mary Meeker, SOI Systems, 45755 Goodpasture Road, Vida Oregon 97488. (503) 896-3936.

Dabrowski's Theory of Emotional Development and Its Implications for Giftedness

June 26-30, 1991. This second annual 5-day intensive workshop will be held at Ashland University in Ohio. Dabrowski's theory emphasizes the role of inner conflict in personality transformation. Learn about "overexcitabilities" and levels of emotional development in gifted and creative individuals. Instructors: Dr. Michael Piechowski, Dr. Linda Silverman, Dr. R. Frank Falk and Dr. Nancy Miller. For information, contact Dr. Jane Piirto, Ashland University, Ashland, OH 44805. (419) 289-5379.

Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children

The World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, Inc. will sponsor the Ninth World Conference on Gifted and Talented Children in Holland, from July 29-August 2, 1991. English will be the official conference language. For more information, contact the North American Conference Representative: Richard E. Lange, 834 Inverrary Lane, Deerfield, IL 60015. (708) 537-6029.

NEXT ISSUE

FOCUS:
CULTURAL DIVERSITY

GIFTEDNESS, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE OLD MELTING POT
Carole Ruth Harris, Ed.D.

RESPONDING TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN GIFTED EDUCATION
Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D.

Giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences.
— Annemarie Roeper —

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Volume 3, Issue 6

Giftedness, Cultural Diversity, and the Old Melting Pot

Carole Ruth Harris, Ed.D.

Cultural diversity is not a new concept, but a new term for an old concept. Every few years, such a new term catches the collective attention. Not so long ago, the term, "melting pot," was considered a nice term, in the strict definition of nice, meaning apt, as well as in the broader, popular concept, meaning polite. Let us examine, however, this old sound bite, which was in vogue long before television began to channel our susceptible minds.

When one concentrates on its implications, "melting pot" conjures the image that different cultures, personalities, desires and abilities are made of a substance which can be melted and re-formed, like wax. Although the term was originally intended to encompass the symbolic openness of acceptance of all cultural groups, the concept, in usage, deteriorated into jargon, loosely associated with patriotism. Eventually, it was transferred to education and came to imply that education was a sort of wonderful cauldron, strategically placed over the fire of curricula, lighted by English, with tinder made in the U.S.A. *(Continued on page 7)*

FOCUS ON:

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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Cultural Diversity In Gifted Education

Joyce VanTassel-Baska, Ed.D.

Cultural diversity issues in the larger society and the world of schools have led us as a field to consider ways of approaching two problems we have not systematically addressed. These problems are: the underrepresentation of minority groups in gifted programs and the relative inability to retain and motivate minority students even when they have been identified for programs. These dual problems deserve the attention of gifted educators for several reasons. We live in a pluralistic society, one that calls for the use of multiple perspectives in solving problems, one that values diverse opinions, and one that strives for a meaningful consensus. At least this is the society we envision for ourselves. If gifted education, as the standard bearer in the schools for quality education, cannot adopt this vision, then where will it be enacted? We need programs that deliberately model these pluralistic processes.

Moreover, we as a field have an obligation to develop the talent potential of all children who show promise, but especially those who because of cultural group identity and *(Continued on page 10)*

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

This is a pivotal time for *Understanding Our Gifted*. The newsletter recently has been purchased from Snowpeak Publishing by Dorothy Knopper, our Antenna columnist. All who have been associated with this publication are deeply grateful to Linda Mancini for creating *Understanding Our Gifted*. This wonderful gift to the field would not have happened without Linda's vision, endless time and energy, aesthetic talent and financial support.

Our new publisher, Dorothy Knopper, offers not only her enthusiasm for the newsletter but also a wealth of expertise in gifted education that she will be happy to share with our subscribers. This is an excellent time for your input. Please take the time to contact Dorothy and tell her what you like about *Understanding Our Gifted* and what improvements you recommend. You will find her responsive and eager to be helpful. She can be reached at the following address:

Dorothy Knopper, Publisher
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We have some other exciting news as well. Starting with this issue, Dr. Deirdre Lovecky, who gave us "The Divergently Thinking Child," Vol. 3(3), and "The Sensitive Gifted Boy," Vol. 3(4), is our new regular columnist for "The Hidden Gifted Learner." Dee brings an extraordinary background to this column as an author and clinical psychologist specializing in gifted children with learning and emotional problems. In upcoming issues, she will deal with topics such as nonverbal learning disabilities and social learning disabilities. Martha Morelock will continue to contribute articles to *Understanding Our Gifted*. Look for her article in the January issue in which she will share a new definition of giftedness proposed by "The Columbus Group."

In addition, starting with our next issue, we welcome Dr. Annemarie Roeper as our new Parenting columnist. Annemarie, well known and loved throughout the field of gifted education, has always wanted to have a column in which she could address parents' questions directly. So please send your questions to Annemarie via Open Space Communications. Many, many thanks to Betty Meckstroth for three wonderful years of service to parents of gifted children through her column. We will miss you, Betty.

We know that you will enjoy this special issue on cultural diversity. It is packed with powerful ideas you will want to share with others. If you are a parent, you might consider purchasing a gift subscription of *Understanding Our Gifted* for the administrator or g/t teacher at your school. Thank you for your support and for helping to spread the word. We look forward to serving you even better in the future.

Linda Silverman

Understanding Our Gifted

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Deirdre V. Lovecky

THE HIDDEN GIFTED LEARNER

Is Academic Achievement a White Prerogative?

Some minority students are able to achieve within the parameters of the system. Phieu Bui, for example, escaped the Keumer Rouge, spent years in refugee camps, yet managed to graduate first in his high school.

In the biographies of well known black people, the support of family and community, particularly the black church, has until recently played an important part in the development of the talent of black youth. For example, the congregation at opera star Marian Anderson's church was able to sponsor one year of music school for her. However, things seem different today. In Tracy Kidder's (1989) book, *Among Schoolchildren*, one Puerto Rican girl, Judith, recognized by the teacher as the brightest child she has ever taught, does not take part in the school's gifted program. Robert, a black student in a local school, scored in the gifted range on intelligence tests, but was not admitted to the gifted program because achievement scores were not high enough, despite clear evidence that he was gifted but dyslexic.

One of the biggest problems confronting educators and professionals dealing with minority youth is the youth's attitude that learning and achievement is "white," and therefore of no interest or importance to them. Many inner city black youngsters have associated blackness with victimization, and consequently, with the characteristics associated with it such as lack of education, poverty, and lack of success. Many black adolescents regard academic success as inaccessible to them, and strongly identified as off limits. The result can be a self defeating "Why try?" (Watts, 1991).

There have been a number of successful efforts to change this attitude (Freiberg, 1991). Baltimore, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. have started various programs that focus on fostering pride and achievement in young black males. These range from providing scholarships and mentoring youth to total immersion in African-American culture. All of them are experimental and controversial. However, such programs carry the risk that, in bureaucratic hands, they will later recreate barriers of racism and sexism (Gibbs, interviewed in Freiberg, 1991).

Minority students have the chance to achieve when there is support from their environments that learning is valued. Community organizations including churches, social agencies such as Boys' and Girls' Clubs, community centers, youth programs and such need to provide both minority and white role models who demonstrate working together in ways that suggest strongly that achievement is not run by whites and is not only for whites. This is one reason why integrated teaching staffs in schools is so important.

Minority gifted children also need mentors within the school system. Mentoring needs to be associated with developing creativity, learning problem solving and learning about life outside the ghetto. The students need mentors who focus on their particular individual strengths, rather than just being a buddy who stops by occasionally to see how they are doing. Mentoring can provide the enrichment and excitement that students need to start thinking differently about learning and achievement.

Inner city minority gifted students need the same consideration for special needs services that white students receive. Rather than assuming that underachievement is due to attitude, poor motivation or poverty, assessment of the learning strengths and weaknesses of such students is important. This is particularly the case with bright thinkers who perform at about grade level.

Finally minority students need to have a dream, and someone to tell them that hard work and using their minds will open doors. Since this advocate is often a mother, aunt or grandmother, it is important to reach out to parents, especially single parents, and provide activities and programs for both the parents *(Continued on page 13)*

PARENTING

A Golden Guide

Your reading this shows that you are among the most conscientious, most concerned parents. You who carefully explore ways to encourage your children may sometimes feel more anxious and less assured that you are doing things right.

You know how defeating it is to hear, "You could do better." ("That flower arrangement is pretty, but you could do better!") Would you say that to someone you respect? Yet, you probably shame yourself with judgments like that every day!

When I met with a group of highly gifted children in Maine, Carrie asked me, "Where does giftedness come from?" Confidently, I elaborated about genetic and environmental influences on intelligence—before being corrected by Stephen: "No! Our parents get it from us! First, we're identified for a gifted program, then our parents start coming to meetings and reading books and then they start to recognize that they're gifted too!"

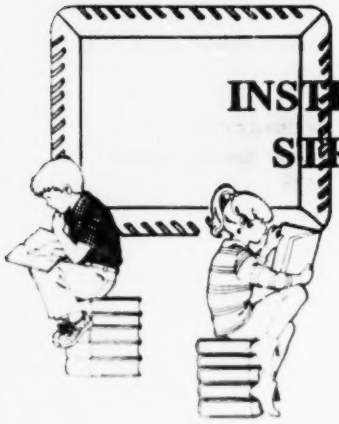
When discussing a child's giftedness with parents, I often hear mothers explain, "He gets it from his father." Linda Silverman continuously hears the same story. She has found this separation from one's giftedness to be quite prevalent among mothers of gifted children. Since so few mothers can claim their giftedness, she has begun giving workshops entitled, "Whoever Heard of a Gifted Mommy?" It is very difficult for mothers to acknowledge that what they do and how they do it may be related to their own abilities. I wonder about the prevalence of this destructive syndrome.... Many mothers have divulged, "I used to be a gifted child," as if intelligence atrophies with age. Not so! (It just feels that way sometimes!) What debilitating legacies are passed on to daughters of these women who do not own their intelligence? How are their sons handicapped in their future relationships with women?

It's not unusual for very bright people to think that they are less intelligent than others because they can think of so many possibilities. They learn exponentially and they relate new information to their great storehouse of knowledge. The way their minds work may seem "off the wall" to others because they see more rational connections than others do. In taking tests, multiple choice and true and false questions can be very perplexing for gifted people. Another reason gifted people honestly think that they are less bright than other people is because they have so many questions in their mind and are aware of what they do not know.

Often, their agonies ensue from some of their most precious qualities: Their infinite sensitivity opens them to excruciating vulnerability to criticism and rejection. Being creative may mean rejecting their peers' ways of doing things. Facility in learning leads to frustrations with others and the low grade anger of boredom. Idealism can lead to cynicism.... Whatever the stressor, gifted people tend to react more intensely. Thus, gifted people may worry that they are coping less well than most others.

Sometimes we get so consumed by our daily tasks that we lose touch with our purposes. How do you want your children to remember you? As having a sense of humor? as understanding? as happy? Since you are a source of these qualities, you must merit yourself with the same compassion you would have for your best friends. Understand and honor your own giftedness so that you can be a "golden guide" for your children to accept and respect themselves.

Elizabeth Meckstroth is a therapist and consultant in Evanston, Illinois and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child.*



INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Karen C. Nelson

Turning Creative Thinking Into Positive Social Action

One of the difficulties of teaching problem solving in the schools is that there are no "real life" consequences of actions taken and decisions made. Program activities *can* inspire gifted learners to deal with actual human and environmental problems in their schools and communities—local, national, international.

Social action helps exercise thinking and leadership skills; it can also nurture intrinsic motivation and altruism. As Linda Warsaw, who founded "Kids Against Crime" at age 12, says, "A lot of people won't do anything unless they get paid. But reward is just helping other kids and making a safe future" (Lewis, 1991, p. 90).

A very useful curriculum tool to use to "turn creative thinking into positive action" (Lewis, 1991) is *The Kid's Guide to Social Action*. In "Part One: Life Beyond the Classroom" students ar invited to:

> *Meet the kids from Jackson Elementary School in Salt Lake City, Utah, whose efforts resulted in the cleanup of a hazardous waste site, the passage to two new laws, the planting of hundred of trees, and sidewalk improvements. Learn how you, too, can create projects that make a difference. (Lewis, p. 1)*

The Kid's Guide...is not a book of lesson plans or ready-made projects; it's a how-to book designed to be put directly into the hands of kids. Practical advice is given on topics like: how to write a letter to an editor or public official; interviewing ideas and tips for successful speeches; how to write successful surveys, petitions and proposals.

Guidelines are also provided for powerful fundraising and winning grant applications—and even how to initiate and change laws. The advice given is realistic and specific. (Do you, for instance, know exactly how to address a letter to a U.S. Senator or a member of the President's cabinet? The *Guide* tells you.)

Interspersed with the how-to suggestions are delightful examples of kids' action projects from around the country. Alison Stieglitz, for example, began a project to feed the hungry on Thanksgiving. Using money from her bat mitzvah, she assembled 15 baskets the year she was 13. By the time she was 17, her Thanksgiving Basket Fund (now incorporated as a mini-business) was able to feed 480 persons on Thanksgiving Day thanks to Alison's fundraising efforts and recruitment of volunteer helpers (Lewis, p. 23).

Run by kids, for kids, a program called "Take Back the Parks" runs recreation and arts programs in New York parks in an effort to reclaim them from crime and drug abusers (Lewis, p. 92). In Raton, New Mexico, 80 teenagers spearheaded a different type of reclamation project: environmental work to contain polluting mine tailings in Sugarite State Part (Lewis, pp. 64-65). In a small town in Pennsylvania, high schooler Rebecca Brown, with some help from her Girl Scout troop, brought a public library to town (Lewis, p. 53).

Besides providing practical know-how and inspiring examples, the *Guide* lists resources and "tools" such as sample survey and petition forms or a grant application checklist. As the *Guide* points out to its reader (and we think you'll agree if you read this book):

> *The real world is chock-full of real problems to solve... Isn't it exciting for you all these problems haven't already been solved? Solving social problems will bring excitement and suspense into your life. (Lewis, p. 2)*

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Karen C. Nelson, Ph.D., is Coordinator of the graduate program in gifted education at Emporia State University in Kansas. She has been a public school teacher, curriculum editor, writer and poet.

THE READING ROOM

Fantasy today — Beware of Dragons

Modern fantasy tales, like their folk and fairy tale precursors, occupy a valued place in children's literature. Today they are under attack by Christian fundamentalists who believe the stories to be evil in themselves—the wizards, witches, and dragons of classic and modern fantasy to be outriders of Satan's forces. These would-be censors understand neither the nature and history of fantasy, nor humanity's abiding need for the clear symbols fantasy provides of the conflict between good and evil.

Feminists, too, find much to question in traditional fantasy, where both heroes and their powerful adversaries, are almost exclusively male. The books for discussion this time are two that would threaten the anti-magic forces (each contains wizards, witches and dragons) but appeal to feminists (in each the principal hero is female).

Robin McKinley's Newbery Medal winning book, *The Hero and the Crown*, gives us Aerin, the halfbreed only child of the King of Damar, a realm threatened by an amorphous evil growing in the north. Evidence of the threat is the new aggressiveness of northern neighbors and the re-emergence of small but dangerous dragons.

Because her mother is said to have been a witch from the north whose spells won the king's affections, and because Aerin shows no magical powers, the "gifts" that prove royalty, she is shunned by the court. Left to herself, she befriends and learns to ride her father's half-crippled war stallion, rediscovers the recipe for an ointment that protects from dragon fire, and becomes a dragon slayer—an insignificant calling until the awakening of the last great dragon, Maur.

Aerin's real gifts are hidden not only from others, but from herself until she has proven her courage and, on the verge of death, is helped by magic and by love to discover her true power and place in the world. Because a female is the genuine hero of this tale, it could be said to break from fantasy tradition. However, as Aerin fights evil (dragon and sorcerer), she seems a sort of heroic tomboy; neither her power nor her gifts are essentially female. She is a woman in man's clothing, holding aloft a sword which, in spite of its female name, is a standard-issue weapon of male warfare. In essence, this book represents one feminist theory—that to prove their value in a male-dominated world, women should do as men do (only better), being clearly female only in their off time. Power, here, is still defined in male terms, though a female may acquire and wield it.

In *Tehanu, The Last Book of Earthsea*, Ursula LeGuin brings back Tenar (heroine of *The Tombs of Atuan*, second book of the Earthsea Trilogy) and introduces Therru, the horribly burned and disfigured abused child Tenar nurses and adopts. This book can be better understood after reading the others (including *A Wizard of Earthsea* and *The Farthest Shore*). It's a complex book, its levels of philosophical consideration dense enough to reward multiple readings and serious discussion. Through the characters of Tenar and Therru (another female child whose true self, astonishing gifts and heroic destiny are well hidden) LeGuin deals with the differences between male and female power, and male and female morality; the use and abuse of women by men; and such seemingly minor issues as men's cultural belief that women's proper role is to serve them.

After three books in the traditional mode of male-dominated fantasy, LeGuin has created a sort of post-modern feminist fantasy where the power of the female is not an imitation of the male, but something entirely different—both stronger and more enduring. It would be interesting (though possibly hazardous) to get a discussion of this book going between gifted male and female adolescents.

Both books provide plenty of material for discussion; a comparison of the two (fire images and the place of dragons, for instance) would be a fascinating and rewarding literary exercise.

Stephanie Tolan, from Columbus, Ohio, is a noted author of children's books and one of the authors of the award-winning book, *Guiding the Gifted Child.*

This populist concept of "melting pot" also gave rise to an unrealistic notion that after all the cultures had been placed in the cauldron, there would emerge little wax figures thinking, speaking, acting American.

The term was eventually transferred to the milieu of the school so effectively as to be quoted by the venerable Merriam-Webster (1979) in the *New Collegiate Dictionary:*

> *Melting pot: crucible: a place where racial amalgamation and social and cultural assimilation are going on (long cherished the myth of the public school as the melting pot—M. R. Berube) p. 710.*

In education, however, a "melting pot" concept did not, cannot, will not work, precisely because it is, as Berube points out, a myth. Wax, which only stands and melts without a wick by which it may be lighted, does not constitute the stuff of our country or our world, made up as it is of richly diverse, marvelously different people who contribute, or may contribute multiple, diverse talents if these talents are tapped through education. In terms of giftedness, this means that we need to approach diversity, not as a problem to be solved, but with joy in its existence, appreciation of its value, excitement at its potential. We must seek to develop the gifts of diversity, however hidden or hard to find in terms of the educative experience, or we stand to lose a valuable resource.

The meaning of cultural diversity takes on a special significance antithetical to the notion of the melting pot when we think about giftedness. In terms of our society, it means that traditional educational perspectives need to be widened to include a global outlook so that a simplistic view of what education is supposed to do is replaced by a realistic view of what it actually can do. In terms of giftedness, a re-evaluation of its definition, when addressed in terms of diversity, includes the forms which giftedness takes and the types of societal contributions and self-actualization of different cultural and ethnic groups (Harris, 1991). Take, for example, the way in which giftedness is viewed by Native Hawaiians. The preservation of the Hawaiian culture, through dance (hula), great feats of memory (chants) and feeling the "eha" or "the hurt," —the Hawaiian child's extraordinary sensitivity to human nuances—constitutes a contribution to the individual culture. By doing so, it also enriches the American cultural stream. The view is that of a fascinating kaleidoscope with endless possibilities, wherein the colors and shapes do not become monochromatic, but join to create new patterns at every turn.

> ***...we need to approach diversity, not as a problem to be solved, but with joy in its existence, appreciation of its value, excitement at its potential.***

The myriad aspects of giftedness and cultural diversity, which thus provide opportunities for the maximization of potential for all individuals within the extraordinary spectrum of American society, actually become a reality through three educational action areas. These are: identification, intervention and implementation.

IDENTIFICATION

While testing remains a valid approach to identification of giftedness, broader, more inclusive approaches are needed to supplement testing programs in order to provide for variables associated with learning style, inter-cultural communication and linguistic difference (Harris, 1991). These approaches can include multi-dimensional screening devices and questionnaires and assessments of personality characteristics which cull the attributes of potential across cultures. Examples of these include the Kranz *Multi-dimensional Screening Device* (MDSD), the *Group Inventory for Finding Creative Talent* (GIFT), developed by Rimm, or the widely used *Torrance Test of Creative Thinking* (TTCT), as developed by Paul Torrance. A comprehensive listing of such instruments may be found in Tannenbaum's book, *Gifted Children* (1983), an excellent source for parents and educators who wish to take a closer look at identification processes for the culturally diverse.

Peer evaluation, which enables the culturally diverse to identify giftedness using ethnically defined concepts, is also a valuable tool in this application. Still another approach includes identification by parents, teachers and community leaders. In utilizing the latter approach, it is important to reach agreement on the diverse definitions of giftedness and establish parameters for the purpose of the identification, or the mode may be misunderstood. A clear definition of giftedness with input by all participants in the identification process is, therefore, essential in culturally diverse settings.

It is also advisable for any identification procedure which is directed to cultural diversity to have at least three different types of approaches or instruments. This will assist those involved to avoid cultural bias or constrictions which are exclusionary and allow the procedure to maintain balance.

(Continued on page 8)

INTERVENTION

Intervention includes curricular planning which will result in programs which are culturally appropriate and stimulating and which optimize the innate capability of the students. Curricular planning, rather than merely reflecting the background of the cultural groups being served, should include preparation for a changing world without denigration of the originating culture. Vital to such planning is attention to self-image, a realistic grasp of the global picture which reduces feelings of isolation, and achievable standards of excellence which provide opportunities for growth while fostering cultural pride (Schulkind, 1982).

In considering program development for the culturally diverse, special attention to areas of cultural conflict such as child-adult interaction and sex role interpretation is likely to achieve maximum results. Schulkind (1982), in her article on creative programming, provides guidelines for the planning process as follows:

- **Environmental sensitivity and awareness**—*Did I notice how things are usually done before I made my suggestion?*
- **Self-awareness**—*How do I really feel about these local customs? Do I respect them?*
- **Community involvement**—*To what extent can I expect community cooperation in this effort?*
- **Enhanced self-image**—*Will the program increase the child's self-appreciation?*
- **Orientation to success**—*Did I set concrete, product-oriented, touchable, displayable results which serve as a reminder that success can be achieved?*
- **Historical perspective**—*Did I carefully research local customs and history before designing the program?*
- **Focus on values**—*Did I consider cultural values before proceeding with the plan? Does the program not threaten these values?*
- **Transition between cultures**—*Is the program structured to accommodate the fact that the child and culture are now in a transitional, perhaps volatile period?*
- **Reducing the sense of loss**—*Is the child in danger of forgetting the old culture after completing the program?*
- **Feasibility of operation**—*Can the program be streamlined so that it is cost-effective, realistic, and viable within the given physical environment?* (p.35)

Emphasis on problem-solving, with a view to curricular flexibility and a strong commitment to community involvement will do much to foster and encourage educational efforts for gifted students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Any planning for the culturally diverse gifted needs to have as its basis a free exchange of ideas. This creates a forum for intercultural exchange, invigorates the process, encourages active participation, and promotes ownership.

IMPLEMENTATION

However excellent the curriculum, it cannot exist in limbo. Teachers who are sensitive to the needs and requirements of the culturally diverse gifted are essential to the success of the program.

Several factors are at work here, not the least of which is a full understanding of the role of the teacher as facilitator, one who is open to concepts and behaviors of diverse ethnic groups. There are some cultures in which learning styles differ, in which body language and touching are part of the communication pattern and still other cultures in which even eye contact is interpreted as a sign of disrespect (Harris, 1987).

> ***[We need] programs which are culturally appropriate and stimulating and which optimize the innate capability of the students.***

In my extensive travels, especially in Asia and through field experience in remote places, such as Micronesia, I have witnessed the seemingly miraculous transformations of previously underachieving culturally diverse, economically disadvantaged gifted children through combinations of teacher flexibility and curricular planning which have the right balance. It is not enough to know that the gold is in the ground or that you know how to get it out. You must have in your employ one who is determined to do the actual digging for the lode. Frequently, this proves to be a person of the same ethnic group as the population served, simply because the empathy is already there. At the very least, the teacher of the culturally diverse gifted must be knowledgeable about the cultures served.

In order to dig, one must also have the tools. This means that facilities must be appropriate. If particular cultures learn best in groups, the environment should provide meeting places where noise tolerance is not a problem. If the learning style is attuned to independent study, the environment should provide places for individual study. If the culture is tuned to oral language or story-telling, listening devices such as tapes and individual sets of earphones should have a place beside books and computers so that transitions to the wider, global culture can be made when the student is ready to explore other avenues to self-actualization.

(Continued on page 9)

Lastly, when implementation of a well-planned program is desired, both parent participation and cultural agency input are essential. This is particularly true of immigrant and refugee groups (Harris, 1991), where clarification of the purpose of the program might well be the deciding factor in its success or failure, its continuity, and its ability to adapt to the changing needs of the population it serves.

EVALUATION

Aside from the obvious purpose of using evaluation to determine the success or lack of success of a given program, evaluation can serve as a tool for refinement of program goals and as a vehicle for additional input. All processes, from means of identification to actual implementation, should be part of the evaluation.

In culturally diverse communities, a single questionnaire may not always provide the answers to questions raised by evaluation. Interviews, meetings, field study, case study and testing programs geared to the purpose of the curricular intervention should be considered in the evaluation process. Periodic redefinition of the goals of the program may be necessary to encourage full participation by the culturally diverse constituency. One should also expect, even welcome, disagreement, so that thorough examination of all potentialities can be given the greatest possible latitude, and true refinement made possible.

IMPLICATIONS

Cultural diversity is really democracy hard at work. Although the educational "melting pot" never really existed, misapplication of the myth has done much damage to the rich and variegated resource present in our gifted. The recognition of the value of encouraging diversity in planning for education of the gifted is thus a first step in mustering an extraordinary national resource.

But a far more dangerous notion than "melting pot" has taken hold in America. This has to do with catching up with or getting ahead of other countries—Japan, for instance—through adaptation of systems of schooling which are made to work in smaller, more homogeneous societies. The United States was founded on a premise that fostered opportunity, encouraged individuality, and welcomed change in multiple, often experimental and daring ways. That view is vital to our educational growth, to creativity, and to a perspective that seeks a new vista for each change. We need to consider, in America, the types of educational systems which will maximize our unique resources and our uniquely complex, vastly diverse population.

Cultural diversity and giftedness are not newly-related concepts. If we examine the ethnic backgrounds of our greatest inventors, intellectuals, artists and scientists, a wide cultural spectrum is to be seen. As the world becomes more competitive, however, it behooves American education to focus more attention on this enormously important talent pool: the culturally diverse gifted child.

Stephen Vincent Benét (1930) understood it when he celebrated the vision and the reality of our unique history in "John Brown's Body":

American Muse, whose strong
and diverse heart
So many - - - have tried to understand
But only made it smaller with their art,
Because you are as various as your land.
(p. 3) Invocation, St. 1 (1928)

The realization of all potential lies in each child's potential. In diversity lies the wellspring of our strength and growth. Let us therefore nurture it to the fullest.

Note: Poem reprinted by permission of Brandt & Brandt Literary Agents.

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language barriers may be denied opportunities for educational opportunities. And lastly, given the shift in demographics over the next decade alone, it is clear that the leadership of this country may well rest with the most talented members of our diverse cultural groups made up of people of color.

Several studies point to the need for attending to culturally diverse groups within the rubric of gifted education. VanTassel-Baska, Patton, and Prillaman(1989) conducted a survey in all states and local districts identified as having programs for disadvantaged learners.

Generally, the findings indicate that although states have been consistent in their philosophical support of cultural and racial diversity, they have lagged in incorporating these concerns for equity and pluralism into the definitional structures of their gifted programs. Several perspectives were identified in examining the identification and intervention approaches used by states and local districts in focusing on disadvan-taged gifted learners.

One of these perspectives was equality of treatment. Many states reported no difference in either identification or intervention for the disadvan-taged gifted when compared to other gifted learners, based on a conception that equal treatment was legally and politically the most appropriate strategy. This mode of thinking has several strands. One strand argues that the goal of gifted programs is to educate leaders for American society; thus, mainstream culture and values must be assimilated in order to participate in realizing that goal. Another strand argues that gifted programs should educate for "giftedness" regardless of other factors; thus, other kinds of differences should be minimized in favor of best practices for a population of learners based on discernible advanced development. A third strand of this position holds that differentiating identification or program standards based on low SES or race is an insult to those youngsters and ultimately serves them poorly in an educational sense.

Thus, gifted education as a field is addressing seriously the need for a culturally rich and diverse group of students to comprise gifted programs.

A second perspective was that of equity or affirmative action. This concept holds that minority students should be included in special programs, such as gifted education, at a level commensurate with their representation in the general population. Because traditional approaches to identification have not found minority students in these numbers, both nontraditional instruments and selection processes should be tried to meet the affirmative action goal. Some states and several local school districts ascribe to this idea in principle and may even meet established quotas, yet supportive structures to enable success in gifted programs usually are not assured in such contexts; and data are scanty regarding this issue.

A third perspective identified was the principle of individualization deeply ingrained in the philosophy of gifted education. Differentiation in identification and intervention would occur most naturally at the level of an individual child, not at the level of an ethnic group or SES category.

Consequently, some states could not begin to comment effectively on the survey questions that inferred group treatment based on characteristics beyond aptitude.

The questionnaire revealed that directors of state programs perceived their states as embracing a moderate stance toward a broadened conception of giftedness in terms of identification issues, with a mean rating of 3.3 on a 6.0 scale. Nevertheless, the full range of responses to this item reflects a great deal of individual state variation on the issue. Only 22 states responded that use of a broadened conception was extensive.

The data reveal a generally moderate view toward operationalizing a new conception of giftedness. Even though the field of gifted education has officially embraced an expanded view of who the gifted are in respect to categories, the lack of movement in that direction on the part of states 16 years later is surprising. New theoretical and research work published in the late 1970s and early 1980s has also lent additional credibility to an expanded vision of giftedness. Yet clearly the states do not extensively hold these views, particularly as they might be reflected in standards for funding programs and services.

In the area of nonbiased assessment techniques, all of the states responding to the question indicated some use. But when queried further regarding specific aspects of a nonbiased assessment protocol that might be employed, extent of use dropped dramatically. One component of many nonbiased assessment protocols, for example, is the use of nontraditional tests or use of different norming standards for an existing test. Yet 48.1% of the states indicated little or no use of such testing measures, as contrasted to the 19.2% who indicated only a little use of nonbiased assessment techniques.

This discrepancy may be interpreted in several ways. One interpre- *(Continued on page 11)*

tation may be that the respondents are not familiar with the specific components of a nonbiased assessment protocol, even though they react affirmatively to the terminology. Another interpretation may be that respondents view techniques such as observation by teachers and parents as more indicative of what is meant by nonbiased assessment. A third interpretation, however, is that reported use of nonbiased assessment techniques is greater than actual use when one examines individual components of an identification system.

The data also reflect strong use of traditional approaches to identifying the disadvantaged gifted, with 88.5% of the respondents indicating the use of norm-referenced tests and 90.4% using teacher nominations. No other techniques were so extensively used in the identification process. Still, the limited numbers of disadvantaged students in gifted programs would lead us to believe that greater use of nontraditional measures is needed to identify this population. The mean response to this item was 4.4, and all states which responded to the item reported some use. Twelve states reported using additional procedures, which vary considerably from one another. No clear pattern of use emerged.

Currently, support for early intervention programs in general is viewed as the best policy initiative that might be enacted. Not coincidentally, this is the area in which research evidence of long-term effects is the strongest (Schweinhart, 1985). Yet, with our most promising learners among the disadvantaged, this intervention approach is still under-utilized.

Although one might see merit in not differentiating basic programs and services for the disadvantaged gifted, lest they be denied the best quality program available, there is unquestionable benefit in building beyond that basic delivery system to include more specialized services from which they might uniquely profit. Academic self-competence usually is not an issue for advantaged gifted learners, but it may be for disadvantaged ones (VanTassel-Baska, Olszewski-Kubilius & Kulieke, in preparation). Thus, the need for additional opportunities for counseling, mentorships, and special tutorials seems warranted. We also have ample evidence that these students, even those who perform well on typical in-grade standardized tests, do not score as well as their advantaged counterparts on more powerful test measures. Thus, intervention opportunities that can assist these students with accessing advanced skills also seem warranted.

Arnold (1991), in her study of culturally diverse disadvantaged valedictorians, found that the struggle for educational attainment continued for these students throughout their college years due to several factors, including geographical boundedness, family ties and obligations, continuing financial problems, and the inability to devote full time and attention to academic pursuits. These problems point up the difficulty for minority students in handling the important transition from high school to college and from college to the workplace. VanTassel-Baska, et al. (in preparation) found that while culturally diverse students, especially African Americans, had a good self-concept about their ability, they lacked too often the information base and the social support system to accomplish their stated and envisioned aspirations. Thus, even for the most talented among minority group membership, there exist barriers to educational and vocational accomplishment.

There are several general prototypes of programs that have proven effective with gifted and talented learners from culturally diverse backgrounds. Some of these approaches are cited below:

INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION

Culturally diverse gifted learners many times need the support structure of one-on-one assistance. With such encouragement they can more easily traverse the talent development continuum. As one eighth grade African American student stated, "... tells me I can do anything and I have begun to believe her. She encourages me to do well in school and always asks me to explain a 'B' grade'."3

MENTORSHIPS AND INTERNSHIPS

Real world connections for this group of gifted learners is important because of their need for 'hands-on' learning and the connectedness factor to the real world. Moreover, many times low income issues overlap greatly with cultural diversity to create an additional risk factor. Internships, in particular, can create future earning contexts as well as learning contexts that can link gifted students to educational attainment opportunities grounded in real-world practical experience.

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

There is a need for these students to focus much more on goal setting, long-term planning, and processes for monitoring and assessing their progress related to educational attainment (Continued on page 12)

issues. Thus, we must ensure that these core skill areas receive adequate attention at key stages of their educational development. Particularly critical points for emphasizing these skills are the middle school years when future planning and access to outside opportunities become necessary in order to gain educational advantage.

What response is gifted education as a field making to address the needs of the culturally diverse gifted student? Currently the eight million dollar allocation from the Javits Act at the federal level is being used to address the issue through 41 special projects funded across the United States. These projects are all aimed at providing identification and intervention models that would allow for broader representation of minority groups in gifted programs where the curriculum and instructional processes are better tailored to their needs. Project Mandala, one of those model projects, at The College of William and Mary, attempts to serve 150 at-risk students and their families. Some of the promising directions in identifying the culturally diverse have been studied by Mandala staff and have been found to be:

- *Individual testing for ability and achievement.*
- *Use of non-traditional test measures such as the* ***Matrix Analogies Test*** *and* ***The Raven's Progressive Matrices.***
- *Behavioral assessment of teachers based on the use of gifted activities.*
- *Nominations from parents and community members.*
- *Consideration of risk factors in the selection process.*
- *Use of profiles of students that highlight strength areas on major components of wide range tests.*

Moreover, Project Mandala is in the process of developing curriculum modules that are tailored for use with culturally diverse groups of gifted learners. These modules are being developed with special consideration for being responsive to criteria which are sensitive to cultural group needs. The following criterial list of multicultural issues exemplifies the tailoring approach being taken with the curriculum:

- *Presence of information about cultural differences and contributions of minorities.*
- *Avoidance of bias and stereotyping in resource materials.*
- *Interactive and cooperative learning strategies.*
- *Emphasis on analogical reasoning and associative thinking.*
- *Emphasis on expressive oral language.*
- *A concern for affective development.*

Thus, gifted education as a field is addressing seriously the need for a culturally rich and diverse group of students to comprise gifted programs. And we are further providing program services responsive to the needs of the culturally diverse in the context of overall program development.

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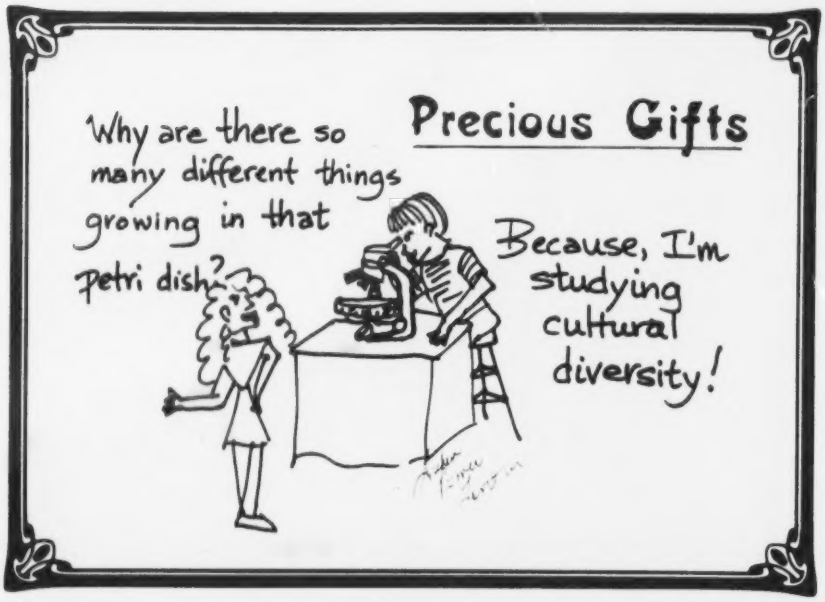
Precious Gifts
Why are there so many different things growing in that petri dish?
Because, I'm studying cultural diversity!

and their very young children. If the idea of achievement can be taught from an early age, minority youth have a chance to begin building self esteem as learners before they encounter situations that kill achievement. In addition community organizations need to fund opportunities for success, including reading marathons, studyramas, academic competitions rather than only sports oriented ones, and scholarships for elementary school children for lessons in the arts and special subjects not taught in schools such as Latin and chess. Were these to be offered to minority youngsters rather than only to their white counterparts, minority youth might soon get the idea that adults in their community valued knowledge and learning.

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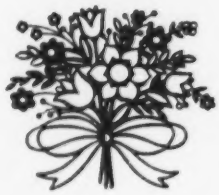
How To Impress A Guest Speaker



Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D.

Planning a conference is a big job, and sometimes individuals are asked to take on this responsibility with no prior experience. After spending most of the last ten years on the road, it occurred to me that it might be helpful for organizations in different states to know some tips from conference organizers who have made speakers feel particularly welcome. This "how to" guide represents the best of my consulting experiences; it is a compilation of practices from different agencies. Some are more important than others and will ensure a smooth conference (e.g., number 1 is a must, whereas number 12 is just a nicety).

✿ One person should be responsible for each speaker from the initial contact to the final thank you letter. The contact person should be the only person with whom the consultant needs to communicate for all of his or her needs. Instead of, "That's not my department," presenters should hear, "I'll find out and get back to you." The initial contact should be made by phone, not by letter. If you are inviting many speakers, assign a hospitality person for each one. This person (perhaps a parent volunteer) should be extremely well organized and have full responsibility for the consultant.

✿ Contact the speaker a year in advance, particularly for Fall or Spring conferences—a consultant's busiest seasons. Are you in a warm state? If so, you will have a better choice of speakers if you plan a winter conference. If your group has their hearts set on a particular presenter, select several workable dates and plan the conference around the consultant's availability. If the date is set in stone, rank order several potential guest speakers and find out who is available on that date.

✿ If your meeting is to be held in a remote area, be prepared to compensate your presenter for the extra travel time. Remote areas also cost more to fly to, so plan a Saturday conference to reduce airfares. If Saturday is not feasible, team up and arrange two consultations for Friday and Monday; staying over a Saturday night dramatically reduces the airfare. Let the speaker know which airport is closest to the conference site.

✿ DO NOT OVERLOAD YOUR SPEAKER in an attempt to "get your money's worth." One or two dynamic presentations will have a greater impact and be remembered longer than four presentations by an exhausted and wilted presenter.

✿ In planning the itinerary, take into account jet lag and the time zone from which the consultant originated. A West coast presenter will not relish a breakfast meeting on the East coast at 8:00 AM.

✿ After ascertaining the consultant's availability and rates, get back to him or her within a week or two to confirm dates, times, places, fees and topics. Follow up the phone call immediately with an initial letter confirming the phone arrangements.

✿ Book a first rate hotel for your conference with good facilities as early as possible. If your meeting is at a school or other agency, arrange for the consultant to stay at the nicest hotel or bed and breakfast in your area, near shopping, restaurants and other conveniences. Arrange an upgraded room. Direct bill the room to your agency. Contact the hotel several times to make sure the room remains reserved. *(It is horrible for the keynote speaker to find no room at the inn.)*

✿ Request handouts 3 months before the event. If there is a limit to how many pages you can reproduce, indicate that limit. Ascertain your speaker's audio-visual needs, if a non-smoking room is needed at the hotel, special dietary requirements, etc. Request the consultant's social security number for tax purposes. Ask for a photo for the flyer, the conference program and press releases. Ask the presenter to make early flight arrangements and send you flight numbers, origin of flight, date and time of arrival and departure.

✿ Pay travel agent or speaker in advance for airfare to assure the least expensive rates. Travel

agents usually need a credit card number since nonrefundable tickets must be purchased within 48 hours of reservations. Purchase orders are not usable.

✿ Send a detailed itinerary two months before the conference. Do any of the paper work required so that the consultant can receive a check the day of the presentation. Begin press coverage. Advertise your conference well to assure a good turn out.

✿ Send the consutant a copy of the program as soon as it is off the press. Provide the speaker with the phone number of the hotel, your home and work numbers, and the approximate number of participants expected.

✿ Order flowers or a fruit basket for the speaker's room or create a basket of souvenirs from local vendors of products made in your state. (Dark chocolates are nice, too! *Consultants love presents!!*)

✿ If the consultant has agreed to spend extra time in order to save your agency on airfare, or has come early to guard against missed connections, bad weather or jet lag, arrange for entertainment—sightseeing trips, visiting galleries or museums, shopping, dinners out, or perhaps a small dinner party. Hotel food is usually terrible and traveling can be lonely.

✿ Contact the consultant by phone at least a week before the conference to see if there are any last minute questions.

✿ Ideally, as the contact person, you should arrange your schedule so that you are available to meet the speaker at the airport. This will make the consultant more comfortable since you are the person he or she has become familiar with. It also enables you to provide the speaker with important last minute information about the audience and other details, and allows you some special alone time with the consultant—a well deserved bonus for all your hard work and careful attention to details. Don't arrive in a tiny sportscar with no room for luggage! It might be a nice idea to bring someone strong to help with the luggage.

✿ If you are unable to meet the speaker, give the home phone number of whomever will be meeting him or her. Provide other phone numbers in case of emergencies. Call the hotel as soon as possible after the speaker arrives to make sure everything is progressing smoothly.

✿ Go with the speaker to his or her room to make sure everything is satisfactory. Find out on the way if your presenter needs alone time to prepare, is hungry, would prefer company for meals, etc. Bring the speaker a conference packet and badge. Provide information about times to be picked up and place to meet.

✿ Double check the audio-visual equipment, room set up and other arrangements at the conference site. Make sure the audio-visual equipment is in good working order and that an extra bulb is handy for the overhead projector. A pitcher of water is a must. Arrange for a walking microphone or lapel mike. If the session is to be audio- or video-taped, offer the speaker a copy of the tape.

✿ Read the presenter's bio in advance and ask what to highlight in your introduction. If possible, add a personal anecdote. Mention recent publications. Help with handouts, particularly for those who arrive late. Check the room temperature and comfort of participants. Can everyone see and hear the presenter easily?

✿ Feed the speaker! Fast foods in the car or donuts for breakfast do not provide enough nourishment or relaxation to enable the consultant to do his or her best. Do not overfeed presenters before evening meetings. A light early dinner is preferable.

✿ Pay the speaker the day of the presentation. Return originals and photo. Ask the consultant to submit an invoice for any additional expenses incurred that were not included in the check. Arrange for the presenter to be driven to the airport in plenty of time for the flight.

✿ Shortly after the conference, send a thank you note, specifying something in particular you learned from the presentation, along with the check for additional expenses. If there has been press coverage of the conference or personal interviews with the speaker to promote local efforts for the gifted, send the presenter the newspaper clippings.

The more of these guidelines you can incorporate, the happier your speaker will be. Good luck with your conference planning!

Linda Silverman, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and Director of the Gifted Child Development Center in Denver, Colorado.

THE HIGHLY GIFTED

Highly Gifted Children In Isolated Rural Areas—(Part I)

I will never forget Lou Ann. Bright enough as a seventh grader to qualify for the Johns Hopkins Talent Search summer program, her family was also one of the few families in her rural community who could afford the substantial tuition fee. Lou Ann registered for the summer program—and ultimately did not attend. Lou Ann's experiences had been limited to the tiny rural community in which she was raised. She had never been out of the state in her entire life, had never seen a major city just two hours' drive from her home, and had never visited a friend or a relative for an overnight stay. Furthermore, her father felt that extra education for a daughter was a frill, at best. When it came time to leave for the summer program, Lou Ann simply said, "I can't do it."

Jason was a brilliant boy with a multiplicity of talents, living in a remote mountain community. Highly intellectually gifted, he was also an accomplished writer and artist. His mother regularly drove him 30 miles one way to the nearest library to keep him supplied with books. Throughout junior high and high school, his advisor continued to encourage him to consider such colleges as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, or MIT. And for five years, Jason firmly insisted, "I think I will go to the state university." Only a chance meeting with an Ivy League admissions officer, and family encouragement, finally changed his mind.

The experiences of Lou Ann and Jason are not unique. They typify many of the issues that face highly gifted children growing up in isolated rural areas. Some of these issues affect almost all highly gifted children and their families, wherever they live, and include the problems of finding intellectual peers, developing appropriate educational interventions, financial stress even in upper middle class families, and lack of support networks (Silverman & Kearney, 1989). However, the traditional cultural, economic, and social fabric of many rural communities often combine to make these issues even more problematic than they might be for children growing up in metropolitan areas or in suburbia.

Secondly, factors unique to rural life in the United states may pose particular challenges to the development of highly gifted children.

> *...Wherever they live and whatever pursuits they follow, rural residents do tend to be poorer than metropolitan residents; they are close to nature because they work as miners, farmers, and fishermen; and they are more apt to know all about their neighbors' lives. (Pendarvis, Howley, & Howley, 1990, p. 313)*

Many highly gifted children attend small schools with few specialized staff members, live in communities which are often resistant to change, and are not necessarily acculturated according to urban standards (Spicker, Southern, & Davis, 1987). Indeed, these authors also note that

> *...there remains a subclass of high potential rural students who exhibit behaviors that are antithetical to those of typical gifted students. These include speaking in a non-standard English regional dialect, being less verbal in their oral language communications, having limited experiences outside the community in which they reside, and being relatively unaffected by the pressures of time. (Spicker, Southern & Davis, 1987, p. 156)*

In addition, rigidly defined gender roles are still common in many rural communities, and the development of higher aspirations in rural youth is a double-edged sword—while bringing greater personal opportunity, it almost always means leaving the rural culture, at least for awhile, and perhaps forever.

Many of these difficulties are complicated by the tendency of the general public to either romanticize or denigrate the rural culture itself. Neither Norman Rockwell's idyllic paintings of small town life nor *The Beans of Egypt, Maine*, Carolyn Chute's best-selling, searingly negative novel, accurately represents the world these children inhabit. Growing up highly gifted in a rural culture has benefits, as well as liabilities. To support the optimal development of these children without asking them to deny or denigrate the culture which has produced them requires an appreciation of the cultural foundations of rural life, and a willingness to use the strengths of the culture itself to support the child's development.

In the next column, we will explore several of these issues in more detail, and provide specific suggestions for parents and teachers who work with highly gifted, rurally isolated children.

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OF NDIPITY

Service is the rent you pay back to God for the time and space you spend on Earth.

Betty Siegel

On this journey, let us consider creative ways emotionally sensitive young people can engage in meaningful service. A Swedish youth, Roland Tiensuu, age 12, is one of seven inhabitants of our Earth who received the Goldman Prize, the ecological equivalent of the Nobel Prize, on Earth Day, 1991. Roland's accomplishment was a creative service project (see *Time*, April 29, 1991, p. 66) in which Swedish children purchased more than 17,000 acres of Costa Rica's rain forests. Roland's action has served to inspire youths in Japan, Germany, and the United States to take similar action. A part of the rain forest, now known as Children's Eternal Forest, has been saved.

A decade past, a young Canadian youth, Terry Fox, galvanized an entire nation into action with his Marathon of Hope. Having lost his right leg to cancer at the age of 18, Terry Fox began running across the five thousand plus miles expanse of Canada on his left leg and an artificial limb. While Terry Fox tragically never lived to complete the cross-continental journey himself, he did live to see his service project earn more than $20 million in contributions. In the past ten years, well over $50 million for cancer research has been raised in Terry Fox's memory in Canada alone. Terry Fox Marathons are run annually around the world and continue to raise millions annually for cancer research.

Moreover, Terry Fox inspired another young man, Rick Hansen, a paraplegic, to begin his personal service project, the Man in Motion Tour, in 1985. His goal and accomplishment was to hand roll his wheel chair 25,000 miles around the globe in order to earn millions of dollars for spinal cord research and rehabilitation.

You have not done enough, you have never done enough, so long as it is still possible that you have something to contribute.

Dag Hammarskjold

Michelle Alexander was only nine years old when she invented the *Give Peace A Chance* board game that furthers her dream of growing up in a peaceful world. She has played her game with world leaders and her game has been translated into several foreign languages, including Russian.

A few years ago, Trevor Farrel, then a sixth-grade youth in Philadelphia, saw a local early evening news program about the homeless in his city. He was so disturbed by the plight of people much less fortunate than he that he took the pillow and blanket from his own bed that same night and gave it to a homeless person in inner city Philadelphia. The next night he gathered more blankets and pillows in his neighborhood and distributed them to Philadelphia's homeless. Before the school year was over, an army of volunteers joined his efforts and a new shelter for the homeless, appropriately called "Trevor's Place," was opened. Replications of Trevor's project were created by both children and adults in other communities.

There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed.

Albert Schweitzer

The gift is meant to be shared. Help young people find creative

ANTENNA . . . .

Current Developments in Gifted Education

I Taught Them All

I have taught in high school for ten years. During that time I have given assignments, among others, to a murderer, a pugilist, a thief...

The murderer awaits death in the state penitentiary; the pugilist lost an eye in a brawl in Hong Kong; the thief, by standing on tip-toe, can see the window of my room from the county jail...

All these pupils once sat in my room, sat and looked at me gravely across worn brown desks. I must have been a great help to those pupils...I taught them the rhyming scheme of the Elizabethan sonnet and how to diagram a complex sentence. (White, 1943. Cited in Canfield & Wells, 1976, p.201.)

I'm tired of educational theories. I'm tired of school restructuring. I want to talk about children. I want to talk about kids and what they need and how we're going to help them .... and how we're going to save them.

No, I'm not opposed to reform. Certainly, all the time we've all spent meeting and brainstorming and analyzing hasn't been wasted. Change is healthy, and I believe in it. We need to continue discussing what works best for all students.

However, the bureaucracy of public education is slow to move. Jenine vegetates while her school district figures out how to serve this 7-year-old who tests out of high school math but can't yet master cursive writing. Antonia, at 5, lacks the confidence to communicate her musical talent to teachers who she fears may not understand her shaky English. 13-year-old David tries desperately to suppress his intense interest in astronomy, so that he won't seem different from other kids.

Do Jenine or Antonia or David have years or even months to wait while we decide what works best for them? They are gifted youngsters who look at their teachers "gravely across worn brown desks" waiting for challenge. We will probably lose them before they find that challenge.

Jenine will soon discover that it's not cool for a female to be so competent in math. She will realize that girls get more attention when they struggle with their handwriting than when they master calculus. Antonia may decide that it's not worth the effort to share her precocious musical ability with "outsiders" who are not aware of her passion. David will probably not pursue his all-consuming scientific interests; he will sacrifice his self esteem in an attempt to "fit in."

Yes, I believe in reform, and I believe in change. But mostly I believe in kids.

REFERENCE

White, N. (1943.) **I taught them all.** Reprinted from *Progressive Education* in Canfield, J., & Wells, H.C. (1976). *100 ways to enhance self-concept in the classroom.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Dorothy Knopper is a Private Consultant on the Gifted in Colorado and "Open Space" columnist for *Roeper Review.*

Creative Ventures (cont'd from page 17)

ways to use their God-given talents to help humanity, the other creatures that share our Earth, and the very planet itself. Brainstorm ways students can serve. The following are but a few beginning prompts. They are most effective when youth initiate ways they wish to serve.

- *Create learning games, puzzles. and problems that will help make learning more enjoyable and profitable for younger and less able students.*
- *Use free time in class to help another student come to understand a difficult skill. talent. or process.*
- *Encourage older students to 'adopt' younger students. The sixth-grade student, for example, may become a buddy to a kindergarten child. She carefully interviews the five year-old to determine his likes, interests, and background and then writes a biography of the kindergartner that is laminated and bound and given as a gift to be treasured.*
- *Brainstorm at least 20 ways each child or adolescent can serve his or her family at home. For example, what are 5 things a child can do to help Mom and Dad with the lawn care this summer?*

The examples of service shared on this journey accentuate an important point. One is never too young to serve. Youth need not wait until they reach adulthood to begin making a difference. One of the author's best friends grew up in a home in which the following was the family creed:

Only you can make the difference that only you can make.

Rev. Herbert Swaby

Try to help young people find creative ways to serve and truly make a difference. Service makes the life journey on Earth memorable.

Man at his best, like water, serves as he goes along.

Lao Tzu, The Way of Life

Jerry Flack, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Gifted Education at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, and author of *Inventing, Inventions and Inventors.*

Lisa Ferguson

from parent to parent

We've all been advised never to say "never." It goes for parenting and teaching gifted children too.

Parents and teachers, mentors and administrators would do well to keep all the academic options open, all the time. Avoid the temptation to set limits that relate to the age or size of a child, or to plan too far in advance.

Personal experience indicates that keeping an open mind, and an attitude of flexibility about what may be necessary for the future will prevent the embarrassment of having to eat your words. It is perilous to try to predict what will be needed for any one child's successful progression through the school system, but especially so for gifted, highly gifted and profoundly gifted children.

When my own profoundly gifted daughter was entering kindergarten we were advised by the principal of her elementary school that they would do whatever was necessary, but they would never do anything outrageous such as "teach algebra to a fifth-grader." At the time it seemed a reasonable limitation. However, as she progressed through the elementary math sequence it became obvious that she would in fact need algebra in fifth-grade. Strike one for the principal!

Teachers and administrators aren't the only ones who underestimate the number of realistic possibilities for gifted children. Parents often recoil from options that make their children seem "different" without realizing that a gifted child *is* different and may *need* radical changes to the usual program. When their academics are adjusted properly, gifted children tend to blend right into the crowd—as long as the discussion isn't about age.

My husband and I had our own preset ideas of what constituted a healthy challenge for our daughter, as well as what would be an unreasonable situation. We swore that we would never want our child to be taught at home, "skip" a grade, or enter college early. We hadn't considered that the child herself would have an opinion of what was needed or that the coming years would present a set of circumstances that would make those options sound eminently reasonable. We decided to homeschool her after she announced that she was "never going back to that school." When she was ready for re-entry a grade skip was recommended. So far we have home-taught her and skipped a grade. She will likely enter college early. It looks like three strikes for us!...It's a good thing this game has a lot of innings!

Parent to Parent is your forum for sharing ideas with other parents of gifted children. We want to hear your story—what has worked, or not worked, for your family. Please send your name, address, and phone number to Understanding Our Gifted, P.O. Box 18268, Boulder, CO 80308-8268, and we will contact you for details.

Lisa Ferguson is from Haverill, Massachusetts and the parent of highly gifted children.

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ADVANCED DEVELOPMENT

Volume 3 of ***Advanced Development***, the first journal on adult giftedness, is now available. In keeping with the philosophy of *Understanding Our Gifted*, this companion volume focuses on inner development rather than achievement. The theme of this issue is "The Possible Human," and the featured theorist is Jean Houston. Etty Hillesum, our moral exemplar, was an inspirational person who attained inner peace during the holocaust. ***Don't miss this issue!*** Subscription rate is currently $15 for individuals or institutions. *See order form on page 13.*

Opportunities for Involvement in Global Awareness

The Global Awareness Division of the National Association for Gifted Children will be convening November 6-10, in Kansas City, Missouri, before and during the annual convention of the NAGC. Jim and Deb Delisle are offering a preconvention workshop on Thursday, November 7, from 9:00-11:45 a.m. entitled, "Neighbors, Friends, Futures: Incorporating Global and Affective Education Into the Curriculum."

New leadership is needed to continue the development of this important division. For more information, please contact Lorene Porter, Director of the Lower School, Roeper City and Country School, P.O. Box 329, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48013. (313) 642-1500. General information about the conference can be obtained from Peter Rosenstein, Executive Director, NAGC, (202) 785-4268.

Global Awareness Conference

The Roeper City and Country School is sponsoring a conference on Global Awareness in conjunction with its 50th anniversaary celebration. This event will be held November 13-16 in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. For more information, please contact Ruthann Brodsky, Editor, Roeper Review, P.O. Box 329, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48013. (313) 642-1500.

NEXT ISSUE

FOCUS:
STUDENT RESEARCH

INSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL: WHAT TEENAGERS THINK
Dana Fox &
Shana Katzel

UP BY OUR OWN BOOTSTRAPS
Jeremiah Young &
Demetrius Johnson

There can be little doubt that one of our nation's greatest sources of untapped potential is to be found among the many individuals from low socio-economic levels.

—Carole DeMonbreun—

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